

# JEAN FORD: A NEVADA WOMAN LEADS THE WAY

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## Description

Jean Ford was born in 1929 into an era of major transformations for women in the United States. During her lifetime doors were opening for a few bold and talented women whose actions changed the roles women would play in our country. Jean's life exemplifies the tremendous changes and growth women were experiencing; but more importantly, she was one of the brilliant and remarkable women who led the charge. Her talents quickly landed her in leadership positions, and she relished the challenges. Her impact on Nevada is tightly intertwined with women's issues, and yet the value of her work extends far beyond that. She was ahead of her time in many ways. She was very well read, intelligent, articulate, and interested in the political process. She could see how things could be improved, but sometimes those improvements ran into a wall, because they diminished the power of a chairman or others in power.

Jean has a passion for Nevada; she adopted this state wholeheartedly. When Jean first moved to Las Vegas, she studied every nook and cranny of her new state, and then set out to nurture Nevada through her talents and skills. Along the way she helped many individuals develop their own skills as she worked to improve Nevada's legislative system, to save its parks, to promote tourism, and to preserve the history of its women.

From homemaker to lawmaker to educator, guide, and mentor, Jean's story is one which will speak to the hearts of countless thousands of women who are striving toward a new future, as well as searching for their past. Jean's story is filled with the real-life, behind-the-scenes details of a pioneer's life. It includes the roller coaster ride from heartbreak to triumph, the kind so many of us have experienced as part of our public service journey.



**JEAN FORD:**  
**A NEVADA WOMAN LEADS THE WAY**

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An Oral History Conducted by Victoria Ford  
Edited by Victoria Ford

University of Nevada Oral History Program

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Mail Stop 0324  
Reno, Nevada 89557  
unohp@unr.edu  
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Publication Staff:  
Director: R. T. King  
Production Manager: Kathleen M. Coles  
Production and Photo Research Assistant: Kathryn Wright-Ross  
Senior Production Assistant: Linda J. Sommer  
Adjunct: Mary Ann Larson

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## PREFACE TO THE DIGITAL EDITION

Established in 1964, the University of Nevada Oral History Program (UNOHP) explores the remembered past through rigorous oral history interviewing, creating a record for present and future researchers. The program's collection of primary source oral histories is an important body of information about significant events, people, places, and activities in twentieth and twenty-first century Nevada and the West.

The UNOHP wishes to make the information in its oral histories accessible to a broad range of patrons. To achieve this goal, its transcripts must speak with an intelligible voice. However, no type font contains symbols for physical gestures and vocal modulations which are integral parts of verbal communication. When human speech is represented in print, stripped of these signals, the result can be a morass of seemingly tangled syntax and incomplete sentences—totally verbatim transcripts sometimes verge on incoherence. Therefore, this transcript has been lightly edited.

While taking great pains not to alter meaning in any way, the editor may have removed false starts, redundancies, and the “uhs,” “ahs,” and other noises with which speech is often liberally sprinkled; compressed some passages which, in unaltered form, misrepresent the chronicler's meaning; and relocated some material to place information in its intended context. Laughter is represented with [laughter] at the end of a sentence in which it occurs, and ellipses are used to indicate that a statement has been interrupted or is incomplete...or that there is a pause for dramatic effect.

As with all of our oral histories, while we can vouch for the authenticity of the interviews in the UNOHP collection, we advise readers to keep in mind that these are remembered pasts, and we do not claim that the recollections are entirely free of error. We can state, however, that the transcripts accurately reflect the oral history recordings on which they were based. Accordingly, each transcript should be approached with the

same prudence that the intelligent reader exercises when consulting government records, newspaper accounts, diaries, and other sources of historical information. All statements made here constitute the remembrance or opinions of the individuals who were interviewed, and not the opinions of the UNOHP.

In order to standardize the design of all UNOHP transcripts for the online database, most have been reformatted, a process that was completed in 2012. This document may therefore differ in appearance and pagination from earlier printed versions. Rather than compile entirely new indexes for each volume, the UNOHP has made each transcript fully searchable electronically. If a previous version of this volume existed, its original index has been appended to this document for reference only. A link to the entire catalog can be found online at <http://oralhistory.unr.edu/>.

For more information on the UNOHP or any of its publications, please contact the University of Nevada Oral History Program at Mail Stop 0324, University of Nevada, Reno, NV, 89557-0324 or by calling 775/784-6932.

Alicia Barber  
Director, UNOHP  
July 2012

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## ORIGINAL PREFACE

While every oral history process is as unique as the individual chroniclers, when Jean Ford learned that she had inoperable pancreatic cancer, that set the pace for this project. It also set the framework for Jean's deep introspection about the value of her contributions to the state of Nevada as she began tying up loose ends, completing projects, and passing on to others her leadership role in the Nevada Women's History Project (NWHP).

Jean learned the diagnosis of her illness while attending a meeting at the NWHP office in Reno in September, 1997. The news spread quickly via our NWHP network. I am an associate oral historian with the University of Nevada's Oral History Program (UNOHP), and Sally Wilkins called me within days, urging me to start an oral history with Jean immediately and asking what would be required to make the project possible. Jean's name was already on a very long list of people whose oral histories the UNOHP hoped eventually to record; but upon hearing the news about the gravity of her condition,

Tom King, UNOHP director, made her oral history the program's top priority. Members of NWHP quickly raised funds to support the project, and as the interviews began, further funding arrived from the Nevada Library Association to subsidize publication and placement of copies of the oral history in every public library in the state.

Jean and I began our work immediately. We met for thirteen sessions, beginning in October 1997 and ending in January 1998. Jean's life story resulted in over 40 hours of tape-recorded interviews and over 1,700 pages of verbatim transcripts. Our meetings occurred as she was making difficult decisions about how to spend her remaining time and energy. Preserving her legacy was so important to Jean that she continued our sessions in spite of surgeries, chemotherapy sessions, and radiation treatments, along with their various complications and discomforts. Nothing could deter her from her commitment to record and help edit her life's story.

This project was quintessential Jean Ford. She was always prepared and organized,

always visionary, always involving others in her plans and projects, and always pursuing each goal as far as humanly possible—sometimes beyond. She came to each session thoroughly prepared to discuss the topic at hand, often bringing handwritten notes, photographs and books, or pages of notes from her extensive personal files along with campaign literature and buttons.

As we began recording, the news of Jean's terminal disease reverberated throughout the state, bringing an outpouring of support, honors, celebrations, and recognitions. This response so surprised Jean that she began working to make sense of it at the same time we were recording her story. From both the process of her oral history work and the public reaction to her illness, she seemed to develop a new awareness that her life's work had caused a profound impact on the state and many of its people. That led her to ponder the process by which she had developed the skills of citizen activist, legislator, educator, leader, mentor, and role model. She explained later, "I didn't set out to be a leader. I just wanted to get some important things done. If someone had told me that would take a leader, I wouldn't have thought that was me. For me, learning that I was somebody came late in life."

The best oral history projects bring chroniclers to a fresh insight about the importance of their lives, and Jean's oral history is an example of that process. When we ended the interviews, Jean was moving forward with yet another project. She arranged focus groups of friends who could help in breaking down the essential elements of her leadership style into teachable skills (although we all agree no one person will ever duplicate Jean's combination of skills). She wanted to continue sharing what she had learned and to contribute to future generations of leaders in Nevada.

For me, there was serendipity in the call to be the interviewer selected to work with Jean on her oral history. For several years and along with countless others, I had considered Jean an important person in my life, one who supported my oral history work and writing, so it was an honor to be able to help her. In fact, Jean and I had attended the same workshop to learn oral history interviewing skills, never thinking the future would bring us together to work on her story. (It will help the reader to know that Jean and I have the same last name but are not related.)

I think I can safely speak on behalf of all the staff at UNOHP who worked on Jean's oral history when I say that many times her personal story touched me, such as when she described the devastation of her divorce; her constant struggle for income while pursuing important work; bumping into male-dominated systems; and trying to balance time for a personal life amidst everything else. Jean had us all laughing and crying along with her, and we believe her story will touch many others as well.

Most of all, I grew to appreciate Jean's passion for Nevada. Jean adopted this state wholeheartedly. When she first moved to Las Vegas, she studied every nook and cranny of her new state, and then set out to nurture Nevada through her talents and skills. Along the way she helped many individuals develop their own skills as she worked to improve Nevada's legislative system, to save its parks, to promote tourism, and to preserve the history of its women.

Those who study Jean's oral history will readily see that she has, indeed, left a many-faceted legacy to her beloved state and its people. More information about this remarkable woman's impact on Nevada may be found in her personal papers, which have been divided and placed in two locations.

Most papers covering her life and work prior to 1982 are located in the Special Collections Department of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, while papers in the Nevada Women's Archives at the University of Nevada, Reno library's Special Collections Department are primarily dated after 1982. Her papers cover a variety of issues, and finding aids are available at both locations.

This transcript has been lightly edited for readability. Oral history's natural episodic structure often lacks smooth transition from subject to subject, which is indicated in the text by a break between paragraphs. When Jean laughs in amusement or to express irony, it is represented with [laughter]; and ellipses are used not to indicate that material has been deleted, but to indicate that a statement has been interrupted or is incomplete . . . or there is a pause for dramatic effect. For readers who are interested in examining the unaltered record, copies of the tape recordings of the interviews are in the archives of the UNOHP in Reno where they can be heard by appointment. As with all oral history projects, Jean has recorded her *remembered* past, and memory is never flawless. Readers should exercise the same caution used when consulting government records, newspaper accounts, diaries and other primary sources of historical information.

Although the UNOHP committed substantial resources to the project, this book would not have been possible without the help of several of Jean's long-time friends and supporters. Through the NWHP, funding came from Babette R. McCormick (for her son, Jim McCormick) and Maya Miller. Another of Jean's friends, Joan Kerschner, director of the Nevada Department of Museums, Library and Arts, was instrumental in raising funding from the Nevada Library Association to ensure that Jean's oral history

will be available in every library throughout the state.

This project was an enormous undertaking, and credit is due to the Oral History Program for bringing it through to a speedy and successful conclusion while simultaneously working on a number of other projects. Special recognition is also due to the staff of the university's Getchell Library for their help in tracking down name spellings and other facts. (We apologize for any remaining errors in spellings.) With the exception of the photograph by Kate Butler which appears on the dust jacket, all photographs were supplied from Jean's personal collection. The dust jacket was designed by Robert E. Blesse and printed by the Black Rock Press.

Victoria Ford  
Reno, Nevada  
May, 1998



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## INTRODUCTION

Jean Ford was born in 1929 into an era of major transformations for women in the United States. During her lifetime doors were opening for a few bold and talented women whose actions changed the roles women would play in our country. Among the forces at work was the 1929 stock market crash, which resulted in America's Great Depression. It was a time during which many were unemployed, and it was a time when public sentiment was opposed to married women working outside of the home: it was believed that the few jobs that did exist should go to needy men and their families. Then followed World War II, and patriotic fervor changed attitudes. Faced with a labor shortage, the public now approved of women working. Women were propelled en masse out of their traditional homemaker roles and into the workplace, and their roles changed forever and in every way—in the work force, in the political and public service realms, in relationships with men, and in relationships to other women.

Once the war ended, women were expected to relinquish their jobs to returning veterans and to help restore the status quo. However, the demand for women to fill clerical and service jobs remained steady. During the prosperous and conservative 1950s, women who did work remained in lower paying jobs, and two-thirds of all women who enrolled in colleges never earned their degrees. The status quo had changed, but only slightly. Now hindsight shows us that women would never again be satisfied to inhabit only the narrow housewife niche which society had assigned them. Many women were discovering they could no more return to traditional roles after the war than their mothers before them could return to silence after exercising the right to vote. By the 1960s the "frustrated housewife" syndrome was receiving media attention.

The liberalism of the 1960s brought the young and vibrant John F. Kennedy to the White House. He created the President's Commission on the Status of Women, which was chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt. The civil

rights movement resulted in Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act barring employment discrimination based on sex. Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* was published in 1963, and the National Organization for Women was established in 1966 to help integrate women into public and political realms. The women's movement was revived.

By the 1970s a group of courageous, confident, visionary women was stepping through these opening doors. During this decade they created changes for women in general, such as choices regarding abortion, shelters for battered women, and services for displaced homemakers. The National Women's Political Caucus was formed in 1971 to elect more women into government positions where they could have a lasting impact on society, and the Nevada Women's Political Caucus was organized shortly thereafter. A National Women's Studies Association was formed in 1977 to promote research and education on women.

Here in Nevada Jean Ford and I were among those women who stepped forward. It was an exciting time for both of us. Jean's life exemplifies the tremendous changes and growth women were experiencing; but more importantly, she was one of the brilliant and remarkable women who led the charge. Her talents quickly landed her in leadership positions, and she relished the challenges. Her impact on Nevada is tightly intertwined with women's issues, and yet the value of her work extends far beyond that.

I first met Jean in 1973 when I was legislative chair of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) in the Reno-Washoe County area. Jean was serving on an interim committee that was looking at ways to reform the Nevada Legislature as an institution. AAUW supported that, and I testified before the interim committee. She

was the only woman on this committee, and I remember her hair: she has the greatest hair, and I always thought she looked like Maude, the character on the television sitcom, "Golden Girls."

After I was elected to my first term in the Nevada Assembly in 1975, Jean and I became friends as well as colleagues. Legislators were assigned seats on the Assembly floor, and I was assigned one next to Jean. That was the seat that Mary Gojack had originally sat in before she was elected to the Senate. My seating assignment really illustrated the assumption that the three of us were all alike simply because we were women. In reality, we all had common issues that we cared about, but Jean Ford was different from Sue Wagner, and Sue Wagner was different from Mary Gojack. We each came from different backgrounds, and we represented different constituencies. My biggest problem during that term in office was establishing my identity separate from Jean. Although everyone assumed, "Here comes another Jean Ford or Mary Gojack," no one ever said, "Here comes another Bill Raggio or Spike Wilson."

Jean was extremely important to me and very helpful in terms of getting organized and established as a freshman legislator. At that time we didn't have offices—our "offices" were our seats on the Assembly floor, so we spent a lot of time there. Clearly, Jean was issue-driven, and she was extremely businesslike, professional, and organized. Jean is also a private person who can be somewhat reserved. She was not the kind of person to come in and spend time gossiping. She was there to do business: that was just her way.

This was not Jean's best time. I don't think she felt totally comfortable in the Legislature, partly because there were so few women in office. It was also apparent that she was not accepted as well as she would have



liked—she was not part of the inner circle. In spite of that, she went on to become a very effective legislator. She was ahead of her time in many ways. She was very well read, intelligent, articulate, and interested in the political process. She could see how things could be improved, but sometimes those improvements ran into a wall, because they diminished the power of a chairman or others in power.

One time during a hearing, Jean testified about some reform that could improve the system. A key Senator was involved, and he just *belittled* her in front of this large public hearing. She was near tears. After it was over Mary Gojack and I went across to the Ormsby House with Jean, to the room where she lived during the session, and we commiserated with her because of the way she had been treated. There was nothing much we could do, but we ended up laughing and saying, “One day we will be presiding over those groups as majority leader or speaker.” (As it turned out, I did eventually become president of the Senate.) Thus, we helped each other by turning something that was quite painful into a commitment to change the system.

One of my favorite memories of Jean is of an event that occurred while she was in the Senate. Cliff Young, who had been president of the National Wildlife Federation, organized a horseback trip for state Senators in the Monitor Range near Tonopah. The trip was coordinated by the U. S. Forest Service, and about twenty people went along on it. Because Jean was the only woman in the Senate, they let her bring a friend, and she invited me. That was just a gas! Jean and I wore these funny hats. We rode together for five days, and the first days were *so painful* because we were not accustomed to riding horseback. We had our own separate tent, off to the side for privacy, and all the men were very gallant. It was such

a terrific experience, because you really got to know people. That trip really turned me on to the issues facing the U. S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management in Nevada. Jean was so helpful in augmenting my appreciation of the environment! That was extremely important to Jean, while I did not come from that background, and it wasn’t an issue for the district I represented.

Jean gave me a real foundation as to what a legislator should be, especially in terms of being a straight shooter—being up-front and being someone who could be trusted, someone whose word meant something. She reinforced my feelings that honesty and integrity were paramount. In some ways she helped frame my philosophy. I came to the legislature with a Common Cause platform, which then expanded as I developed an interest in many other issues.

Our interest in women’s issues grew along with our legislative skills. It was such a different time! The early 1970s was just the beginning of the rebirth of the women’s movement, so for many of us it was our first exposure to some of these issues. For example, the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA): neither one of us knew much about it while we were running for office in 1974. When people first asked me about the ERA, I would joke with them about “earned run average,” a baseball statistic. I hadn’t given it much thought other than that it made sense—women should be equal. Once Jean and I became a part of the legislative body and worked on it, we came to understand exactly what the ERA would mean to people.

Jean and Mary also helped me in framing my views on women and their roles, and we supported many of the same issues. It was wonderful to serve with Jean during this tumultuous time of change—a truly significant time historically. Being a part of

that can never be taken away. Today, more and more women are being elected to public office, and they will never have to repeat the battles we fought. Those who weren't there can only read about it and imagine what it was like for those who were.

We accomplished a great deal. Even though the ERA didn't pass, we made great strides in getting rid of sex discrimination in the statutes, as well as in dealing with other issues, including domestic violence and displaced homemakers. I sponsored a bill in 1979 that created displaced homemaker centers, but because money for women's issues was so limited, we only got one. It opened on the Clark County Community College campus, and one Friday Jean showed me around the center. On the following Sunday my husband was killed in a plane crash. Suddenly and tragically, I had become a displaced homemaker, just as Jean was as a result of her divorce.

Jean and I have been friends for years, and our lives have continued to have many parallels. She didn't run for a second term in the Senate after her divorce, and I chose not to run for Congress after my husband was killed. We had similar experiences as single mothers raising our children in the glare of the public eye. Our children benefitted in several ways, such as learning great people skills, but Jean and I have also talked about how difficult it was for our children with their mom being gone and no father around.

This was new stuff. Other moms weren't doing this kind of thing in those days. There was a certain tension, because it was a time when women would be offended if they were referred to as "just a homemaker." Some needed to be out there leading the charge, being the super moms and handling it all—career and family. Jean and I felt that staying home and taking care of our children

might not be enough; if we could be in the vanguard of something new, what a fantastic opportunity! But it was damned tough to do all that. Everything doesn't always work right. We had to be tough, and we paid a price. I think it would have been unbelievably difficult without the kind of support I had from Jean Ford and Mary Gojack. Now young women can choose to stay home with their children or choose to work, and hopefully there is no guilt either way: they can be equally appreciated and valued in our society. What a wonderful legacy!

Jean and I are now both educators—another parallel—and she was very helpful to me when I created a class called, "Women in Leadership" at the University of Nevada, Reno. Some of the young women I now teach weren't even born when Jean and I were working on these issues. They don't have any sense of the battles we fought or what it was like to live through them, and that was only twenty years ago.

From homemaker to lawmaker to educator, guide, and mentor, Jean's story is one which will speak to the hearts of countless thousands of women who are striving toward a new future, as well as searching for their past. Jean's story is filled with the real-life, behind-the-scenes details of a pioneer's life. It includes the roller coaster ride from heartbreak to triumph, the kind so many of us have experienced as part of our public service journey.

Sue Wagner  
Reno, Nevada  
May, 1998



*Photograph courtesy Kate Butler*



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## EARLY YEARS: FROM TURMOIL TO STABILITY

*Victoria Ford: Today is October 2, 1997, and I am with Jean Ford in her home in Carson City, Nevada. We are no relation, although that would be a nice thing if we were. [laughter] Jean, tell me the date and place where you were born.*

Jean Ford: I was born Imogene Evelyn Young [pronounced I•ma•gene] in Miami, Oklahoma, on December 28, 1929. That's in northeastern Oklahoma. I've been told that my mother, when she first saw me, said, "They must have made a mistake," and asked them to go check and make sure that that was really her baby, because I had really dark skin. She thought maybe they'd switched me with an Indian baby, as there were lots of Ottawa Indians in that part of the country. But I guess I don't know what happened there; I think that I just had dark skin. [laughter]

We lived there just a few months and then moved to Joplin, Missouri, which is only thirty miles away. That was really my first home. I have, of course, no recollection of living in Miami, Oklahoma. Well, I went

back; Oklahoma became a part of my life later in several ways.

*But your childhood was spent in the state of Missouri. So tell me, what are your first memories?*

You never really know what are your first memories, or what you have seen in photographs that gives you a first-memory kind of thing, but I guess it's as a little girl, toddler, three or four or something like that, because I do have pictures of me at that age playing with doll carriages. I had a little settee that was a replica of a very nice living room settee of the day, and that was pretty special, and so was being with family and relatives.

My father's name was Clarence Nathan Young, and he had been born in 1896. My mother was Daisy Adelpia Flook, and she had been born in 1902 in Ohio. Actually, she was born in Farmersville, Ohio, I believe, and my father was born in Farmersville, Texas. We used to laugh about how unusual it would be to come together from small towns with the

same name like that. They met in Michigan at Battle Creek Sanitarium, which was a health facility that they both ended up at for medical care of some kind.

After my father was born his family moved to Arkansas and lived a very simple life near Fort Smith. Eventually his mother died, and he came up to live with an aunt and uncle near Picher, Oklahoma, which was very near Miami where I was born. This was lead and zinc country, and he worked in the mines and then helped on the farm. He lived with my Great-Aunt Margaret and Uncle Jim Manness. They managed a big dairy farm for someone and had 125 dairy cows and had a garden and raised corn and wheat—it was a big operation. That's where my dad went to live, and he worked in the mines nearby.

*Was he an adult when he went to live there?*

No, I think he was more like a young man, a teenager, because then he went into World War I. He was in the Army and sent to Ft. Lewis, Washington, as a lumberjack up in that area for awhile. At some point he ended up working on the Union Pacific Railroad as a cook from Salt Lake to Omaha, and I loved to hear him tell stories about that. He really enjoyed that. He really liked cooking.

My father just kind of drifted around and went back to Oklahoma after the war, but somewhere along the way he ended up in the sanitarium in Michigan because of stomach problems or something. There he met my mother, who was there because of what they called in those days a nervous breakdown. She had grown up in southern Ohio, had gone to school to Miami University at Oxford and gotten a teacher's certificate (I don't think she went four years) in normal school, or whatever they called it then. She taught for several years, but she was not well and she

ended up at the sanitarium, and that's where they met.

*When you say "not well," it was mental problems rather than physical, or both?*

I think it was mental or emotional. They met there, and I think they had a fairly short courtship. [laughter] I don't know all the details of that, but they got married on Easter Sunday, 1929, and he brought her then to Oklahoma to his aunt and uncle. That was his home base. At that point, both his father and mother were dead.

*And that would have been at the beginning of the Depression too?*

It was. It was very much. Then when I arrived, he had to find a job. So what took them to Joplin, I'm not sure, except it was the nearest larger town, and he ended up getting a job as an insurance agent with Metropolitan Life Insurance.

As I look back, this is a case of a man doing what he had to do to take care of a family. I don't think he had more than an eighth-grade education—well I know he didn't graduate from high school—and he had been working these other, more blue-collar kinds of jobs. But somehow he convinced them he could be an insurance salesman. He was a very quiet, retiring kind of person, and I think it must have been agony for him to go out and sell insurance. I just can't imagine his liking that.

*The job didn't fit his personality at all?*

Right. He would much rather have been a farmer and had his own piece of land, which he then eventually did do. But he stayed with that company for thirty years, and he got the watch and had the retirement dinner, and



then lived another twenty-five years of really happy retirement with some acreage and white-faced cattle, maybe twenty-five head of cattle in his own place, which was really neat.

*And were you the only child?*

No, my brother came along four years later.

*Just you and your brother?*

Right. So we lived in Joplin, in several different houses, which I remember driving by, and people saying we used to live there. I don't remember much about those until really first grade, and then I remember the house we lived in and some of the things that we did then.

*What was it like, the house you lived in?*

It was just a very plain, white frame house, one story with a basement. It was in the south part of Joplin and I could walk to school and all that.

*Was there anything that was your favorite thing about that house that stands out in your memory?*

No. No. In fact, there are some bad memories about the house, which kind of leads us over to my mother's side, so we'll back up and catch up with her.

When we moved to Joplin, I have pictures of her and us. She was a homemaker and loved doing that—loved to cook and wear nice clothes and give parties and a lot of things like that—and played the piano. I started taking dancing lessons probably at three, and she loved that. So we had pieces of stability there, particularly when I was young, that

I remember very well. From the time my brother was born, however, she was really ill most of the time, and so we moved into a time of . . . what should I say? Uncertainty, I guess. She was institutionalized several times, for short times, at a mental hospital sixty miles away in Nevada, Missouri, and we would go up and visit her, but then she would come home. And we would have housekeepers at home during this time.

*When you say she was very ill, what were the symptoms that impacted you?*

You know, I don't remember. I remember just periods where we had to shift gears and do different things. I don't remember being greatly affected by it. The thing I remember was that my brother was not very well, and I felt the need to kind of help take care of him.

When my mother would come back home, we had some rather traumatic times in this first house that I remember living in. I don't recall that I saw this directly, but the story was that she was going to light a match to the gas tank and blow the whole place up because her life wasn't worth living, and my father stopped her in that act. You know, I'm not sure that that's exactly where she was headed, but there was a very traumatic time in the house where she was not rational.

*You don't remember seeing that, but you must have been aware at some level?*

No, I don't. Right. I just remember hearing that she went down to the basement to light a match to the gas tank. Well, that didn't happen, but that was another time that she was taken away and put in a hospital.

And then right after my brother Byron was born (February 4, 1933) was another time. She was schizophrenic—that was the

diagnosis that we had—and she would turn on my father. Here he was trying to . . . just think of him and, gosh, think about what he went through! She would accuse him of not letting her do certain things she wanted to do. At one point she decided to take my brother and me to Ohio, just to leave. My brother had just had his tonsils out. He wasn't very old, maybe two or something, and he was supposed to be in bed.

I can't sort these memories out real well, but twice she ran off with us to Ohio—one time in a car loaded with our living room drapes and other things that we sold along the way. So the car was just loaded with us and things that she thought she needed to survive with, and we did get to Ohio before we were picked up. Another time she took us on the train, and my father found out what was going on, and the police stopped the train right outside of St. Louis where he came and got us. There were just really unsettled times there, and out of that my brother's health suffered. I mean, there was some permanent damage to him, I think, in terms of his heart.

So those years from first to fourth grade were really up and down in terms of whether we had a family functioning or not, and we had housekeepers when my mother wasn't there.

*So housekeepers took care of the house, your dad was there in the evenings, and that was kind of what life was right then? Very unsettled.*

Right. Yes, and we would go up and visit her in the hospital on Sundays and drive sixty miles up to Nevada, [Missouri] and sit and visit with her. But, you know, I really don't remember feeling . . . must have been scared to some degree, but I seemed to go on and kind of take charge.

*Well, that's what I wondered, because you felt concerned about your brother, and so you must have pitched in, in some way?*

I did. That's right. So then we moved to another house for fourth grade. We were over on the other side of town. My mother was with us. I remember her playing the piano. I remember the dancing lessons, so there must have been a reprieve here of some kind.

One day she ran away and went back to the hospital on her own accord, and nobody knew where she was until she showed up there, and then she never left there for the rest of her life. She was institutionalized. She stayed in the Missouri state mental hospital in Nevada [Missouri] until they restructured the mental health system in Missouri, and then she went to a geriatric facility near St. Louis. At that point she was in a contract facility, an old frame house contracted to be a home for people like this. She was in a couple of different homes like that in the St. Louis area, and she died in 1990 at the age of eighty-seven.

*And how old were you when she put herself in?*

Well, I was in the fourth grade, so I was about nine.

*And did you remember thinking that she would come back, that it would be like the other times, that she had only gone for a short time?*

Yes. At that point, I did. Although, within a year my father divorced her, and then he remarried fairly soon after that to a woman that we had known, a friend of the family who was a kindergarten teacher. She and her husband had been divorced. Clarice Boyd was her married name; Clarice Whitwell was her maiden name. She and my dad were



married, and then we moved to another house in Joplin on the edge of town, an area called Royal Heights. We spent my fifth and sixth grades there, and during that time was when my father and Clarice were married.

Clarice had known my mother, and she was very open to trying to help us keep a connection, or whatever needed to be done, so for years we all would go up and visit my mother,. And then, when I went away from home . . .

*When you went to college, you're talking about?*

Right. I would go and visit her independently then, and she would write letters. So, she was up and down throughout my whole life. There were times when we were corresponding quite a bit. She didn't have a lot to say, because she had a pretty narrow life, you know. Sometimes it would be remembering things in our past or her family, and I would write to her what I was doing. And then even later—as I got married, and particularly during the time I was in the Legislature when I was traveling all over the country on various committees and stuff—I would always stop in St. Louis at least two or three times a year and visit her. So I had a connection with her until she died.

In her later years, she did very well and she could function. She was in this geriatric house and took care of herself, played the piano for everybody to sing and was a very social person. Sometimes I would take her out shopping, which she enjoyed. They would give me a pass to take her out for the day, and she would go shopping and have dinner, and then I'd take her back.

*It was really almost an independent living kind of situation? It was mainly having someone there?*

It was, and when I look back, I think she really was caught in the era of warehousing the mentally ill. I think today for someone like that, that would not have happened. There would have been other forms of treatment. She could have lived outside of the institution. So I feel really sad about her life. She was a very vibrant person, the little that I knew her, and it's just too bad. At one point when I was an adult, I thought I should consider: what can I do with her, for her? Should she be out of that institution? I was told by the doctors, et cetera, that they felt she could not live well outside, that she was institutionalized to the point where that was her world. I don't know whether that was doctors trying to keep the count up of the hospital or what.

*Or whether it truly had passed the point where she could have done that?*

Right. Right. I accepted that and left her there. So, a really sad story, you know.

*A very sad story. What a loss. All your life, you lived with that and yet you were able to stay in touch with her.*

Later my daughter Carla visited her, because she was traveling back to medical school and things like that, and she got to know her as a grandmother for a time. When she died, her body was sent back to Ohio. Her parents were both dead then, but she had a brother living in a retirement home in Otterbein, Ohio, and they arranged for her to be buried in a family plot. Carla and I both went to Cincinnati and went to that service; then we spent the evening with my uncle (my mother's brother) and just had a fabulous time going over old photographs and things about their early life.

*Had you known your uncle before?*

Yes, because I had spent summers at my grandparents' in Ohio even after my mother was institutionalized.

*When you think back on it, what would you say the impact on your life was of what happened to your mother?*

Oh, gosh; it's really hard to say. Part of it was that I grew up quick, I think. We didn't have a lot of the support that you get from a mother. On the other hand, people say from birth to five are the critical years, and I think I got what I needed at that point as a good base to carry me on. Otherwise, I don't know. I've thought about it, and I don't have a lot of answers to that.

*Do you think it had any impact on shaping your interests in human problems?*

Well, it could've; it could've. Yes. One of the things is that part of me is just really driven to be involved and to organize, and to do those things I do well. I've often wondered in later years if I unconsciously am wanting to do some things for her as well as for me—live some of the life that she might have lived.

*Because she missed so much being in an institution?*

Right. Yes. I've wondered about that.

This turmoil had a very negative impact on my relationship with my brother, because brothers don't like older sisters bossing them around. I became mother. My dad was gone a lot, working. He was doing all he could just to survive. We had housekeepers—some of which were good, and some of which weren't—until he remarried. And so my

brother had his own set of problems. I think he didn't get the first five years in the way he should have, and also he was not well physically. He has later been diagnosed as sociopathic, which I don't think we know a lot about. He's a very handsome, highly intelligent, con-artist type person. [laughter] He could sell you the Brooklyn Bridge, but he's not grounded in reality.

*So he's not a person you can trust? Does he treat you the same way he treats the rest of the world?*

Well, he's always looked at me as someone that ought to get on his side and do what he needs done to help him—no matter what, no questions asked. He grew up. He graduated from high school. He went into the Marines. He excelled in everything he did to a point, and then he would either quit or get kicked out, because he couldn't function in a group. He eventually ended up in jails and hospitals all around the country. As he would move around, he would set up in a community and create his *modus operandi*, which was always some kind of executive or something. You know, he had this really great need and desire to be important, famous. He would get business cards made up and just create all this stuff. Rent an office.

*Kind of make up a life?*

Right, and then write bad checks, or interpret what somebody said to him as something different from reality and get himself into trouble. Then he'd either be in jail or have to move on. And this is the way he lived his life for many years.

At several points I tried to come to his aid, like in Dallas when he was in jail. You could do nothing. I mean, you couldn't do anything right, because you had to believe his story

only, and you had to do what he needed done or he would be mad. And his story was always in this *gray* area. According to him, he wasn't a criminal. There were always these extenuating circumstances which caused him to do what he did, and people let him down, and this didn't happen the way it was supposed to and all that. And so what's a guy to do?

Judges would let him off, because it was crazy: they didn't want to deal with these kinds of things and he hadn't really committed a crime. Well he did, finally: he took somebody's airplane and flew it across the country. Other times he'd write bad checks, but he was always let off because the judges knew that this man didn't belong in prison. They said he needed help, and so he had a lot of help along the way, a lot of doctors. He was diagnosed a sociopath and he was given lithium. When he took the lithium, it was just *amazing* what a neat guy he could be, but he didn't like to take the medicine. So he just lived an absolute disastrous life all over the country. Fortunately, he never married or had children, to my knowledge.

Early in my marriage, I'd just come back from Honolulu and my brother was in jail in Dallas. We were living in San Antonio, and I went up there to, you know, do what I could. And, oh, it was just terrible! I mean, I could do nothing right. I met with the D.A. I met with all the people and tried to figure things out. When I came home, my husband said, "You know, you have to write him off. You cannot keep doing this, because it's a no win." And he was right.

That seems a cruel thing, but I thought about it and decided it really wasn't. He'd call me and he needed money. He'd leave all these long-distance phone calls. I mean, you can just see yourself being sucked down financially. If there was any good point at the end of that, great! You figure out a way to get

the money or something, but it never ended in anything positive. It was just his being on the run again. And so I decided to agree with my husband, that I could not try to help my brother anymore and that I had a life of my own to live. That really hurt my dad a lot.

*Because he kind of wanted you to help?*

Right, because my dad never wrote him off, you know. My poor dad spent his life never knowing when the phone would ring or what was going to happen next with my brother—that kind of thing.

*Now, is your brother still alive?*

He is alive.

*And do you have any contact with him at all?*

I have had a little bit of contact. He is in the same mental health system that my mother was in. For a while he was in the same hospital; not while she was there. They had moved her to this geriatric hospital in St. Louis, but they put him in this one in Nevada, Missouri. He had some very good years in between. He did take the medicine. There were some people in institutions that befriended him and tried to help him—judges and doctors and individuals. He came back to Joplin . . .

Well, we have to go back to my dad and my stepmother. My stepmother died of cancer, and so my father was alone then. I really cannot remember the year she died, but it would have been in the early '70's. So my brother lived with my dad for several years.

He [brother] was an absolute master craftsman. He could make cabinets, do woodworking and things like that. So he started doing that on a free-lance basis, and

people wanted his work so badly, he just was in business in no time—so much that he had to hire other people to work for him, and then everything would fall apart because he couldn't function in society. He had no clue how to keep a payroll and that kind of thing. He had all kinds of talents. But whatever he would start out to do, first of all, he could never do it in moderation and just be content with whatever you might consider a balance of something. It was always a drive to be the best, to be better than anybody else, to be famous; but he didn't know how to function in society to make that happen. He could not follow the rules of society. So, he'd be off then—writing checks, creating a new company, flying somebody else's airplane, borrowing the car. And he couldn't work with anybody else to do it either, so then he would crash in some legal entanglement. It was just awful! And my poor dad! He was living with my dad at that time, so my dad, of course, could see it happening.

*It would be a real roller coaster. It would look like success was within reach, and then . . .*

Oh! And then he'd blow it.

*So you stayed in touch with your dad but did not stay connected with your brother. Is that correct?*

Yes. Now, because of my dad, I was connected with Byron from time to time; it wasn't my initiative, although I always wanted to hear from my dad what was happening. It became a little difficult for my dad, because he really knew that I wasn't going to get involved particularly. It was hard on both of us, I guess. Eventually, my dad set up a trust for my brother, and we talked about that a lot, and I had no problem with that.

I wanted nothing to do with it, because I truly became fearful of my brother. I think that he resented me. He felt I had gotten this better life than he, early on, and I excelled in everything I did. He was capable of doing that too, but here was the younger brother coming along with not the grounding that I had, and then I had acted as Mom; so there was not a good relationship there. He just wouldn't pay his long-distance phone and when you take the phone call from a jail somewhere, then you don't know what's going on in his mind at that point.

*Had he ever threatened you?*

He did not threaten me, but he could be hostile, and I felt he was capable of hurting me—with cause, in his mind. And so I would just as soon stay away. We still interacted, because he decided to come to Nevada twice. Once he was in jail in Las Vegas, and someone I knew down there called me up and said, "This guy says he's your brother." He was attracted to Las Vegas—big-time, pro-football, people, glamour—you know, the big life. It was inevitable that he would end up in Las Vegas at some point.

Well, when he was institutionalized—hospital or jail—he would be running the place within about three days. I mean, he was so confident, and he would organize. They'd either put him to work cooking or organizing something. While he was in a contained atmosphere, he was the leader. And that's one reason why he would always get out—because somebody would feel like he was capable of making it on the outside, so they'd let him go.

Another time he was up in Elko, and I don't remember who called me that time. He called somebody, and they said, "This guy says he's your brother. He's in Elko, and he wants to set up a new casino up here." [laughter] Ohhhh!

So anyway, he came and went in my life, and I tried to avoid him. He arrived at my house once in Las Vegas, and I was scared to death. He met my kids, stayed a few hours and left.

*Were you alone when he arrived?*

I can't remember. I think it was just the kids and me there. So then he ended up back in the hospital for awhile, and then he was out with my dad again. He was living basically with my dad when my dad died.

*When was that?*

My dad died December 23, 1982. My mother died March 21, 1990.

My dad was in the hospital, and we knew he had heart problems. He'd had a pacemaker put in, and then he had other problems. I went back to be with him, and my brother and I were both there when he died. We had a nice service, and there were all kinds of family and friends around there.

He did leave a trust. He gave me something on the side, a \$15,000 CD, and then just left everything else—property, bank accounts, et cetera—for my brother as a trust to be parceled out. It wasn't a lot, but if he got it all at once, it'd just be gone in one big blow. My brother was just *absolutely* furious.

*That he couldn't have it all at once?*

That's right. He was so angry. I mean, he loved Dad and he was devastated over his death; but he just felt like Dad was treating him like a child—which was true, but he couldn't accept that he was a child. So anyway, we were both there. Here we are, my brother and I in my dad's house.

*And you were afraid of him?*

Well, no. I wasn't afraid of him at that point. I had gone back at a really bad time a few years earlier in an effort, when my dad was first ill, to be helpful and do something. My dad was in the hospital, and the doctor said the best thing would be for my brother to move out—that my brother living in the house with my dad was causing some of his illness and that he just couldn't take it. I went back to help make that happen, and I was *truly* afraid of him.

In the course of three days, the doctor said, "If the brother moves out, your father can go home to his house." So we decided that's what we're going to do. I rented a temporary warehouse space and went to my brother, connected with him, and said, "We have to do this." We moved his stuff to this temporary warehouse, and I remember riding in the same car with him to get there and wondering if it was safe to do that.

But I was very frightened to go to the police and say, "Well, I think I have this problem." And, of course, they have to say, "Well, until there's some evidence that someone's harming you, we can't do anything." So the next day I ended up hiring a security person that they recommended to be within a certain distance, knowing what was going on, and had them follow me for two days while I dealt with my brother. We got my brother's things out of the house and the house fixed so that my dad could move back in, and my brother got an apartment or something—I can't remember what all. That was the really frightening time. I don't think he would ever have hurt me. I mean, he was caught up in his own world. It worked out OK. It worked out OK.

*But only in retrospect do you feel that. At the time, it was very real that he could hurt you?*



Yes. Right. Right. More recently, he ended up eventually in Fulton, Missouri, in a mental health facility that's part of the Missouri system. He called my daughter, Janet, one day about three years ago and wanted to get a big block of rooms at the MGM the following Easter. I mean, big whole pattern—he's still institutionalized.

There were times when the girls did meet him, and he was very nice to them, you know. We have pictures of him as a young man and the girls as little girls.

*But they knew his history?*

Well, yes, but it's real confusing to them. It's kind of hard to understand what all this is about. But he had two or three phone conversations with Jan, and then he sent her a whole bunch of appointment books with all kinds of crazy scribbling in them, of people he's known such as kings and Mother Teresa and all the rest. He just lives in this other world, and he could have met most of them. But anyway, he sent her that stuff and a bunch of old magazine subscriptions and things.

He called me about two years ago, and I took the call. It was like déjà vu, sixty years ago. He said he was going to sue the state, because one of the trucks at the hospital had run over him and broke his leg, so he had a case against the state. He also said this guy, who had been the trustee for dad's property, had walked off with a bunch of it. He just had, again, a list of ten things I was supposed to go do that day. He was at a pay phone on the ward, and he ran out of money, so I called back. What a hassle to even get to talk to somebody, because they won't talk to you unless the patient gives permission. So eventually, he gave permission to a social worker to talk to me. He said he was getting released, and he was making all these plans,

and he wanted to do A, B, C, and D, and he needed me to get things ready for him. Well, he wasn't getting released, but that's been my connection with my brother for years.

*It makes me hold my breath, as you talk about this roller coaster with your brother and the times you were fearful, and how he can still kind of pop into your life with all of his chaotic plans from time to time.*

Yes. You know, I haven't heard from him for awhile, but he's still institutionalized there. It's terrible, because if there were any way to really give him some kind of help, I would do it.

When I was able to talk with the social worker, she fortunately talked with me more than the one single thing that my brother gave permission for us to talk about. She agreed that it's just a *sad* case of a lost soul, somebody very talented and very confident, but who can't function in society. So I don't know what's going to happen.

*And the overriding sense for you, for both your mother and your brother, is sadness, a loss?*

Right. Yes. Right. And then my father—that man was the tower of strength, because he dealt with this all his life. I never talked with him about his divorcing my mother. At that point, I think he kind of felt that she was a lost cause; that she was ill; that she wasn't going to be able to function in society.

*And that was also society's attitude back then. Is that correct? Because this would have been in the thirties?*

Right. Right. She was just kind of gone, you know. Written off. I was born in 1929, so this was in the late thirties.

A time then began with my stepmother. She was very well educated, had a master's degree in education from Columbia University and had been a kindergarten teacher in Joplin. She and her husband had been active in the same church, the First Methodist Church, which my father was very involved in and that we grew up in. She ended up being just this absolutely great companion to him. I mean, it was just incredibly good what happened for them.

She died eventually of cancer. She had a lingering illness for several years. She ended up in a hospital bed in the living room. He took care of her. But my children knew her as children, and we would go visit them from our homes in the early years. I mean, Clarice and my father had a fabulous life together, so I feel so good for them.

*What was she like in your life?*

She was like a house mother. I mean, she was not a warm person to me, but she loved my dad and that was a very good relationship. She came partially because he needed a woman to be the mother of his children, and she came with a sense of duty regarding us. Life started being different when she was there. It was stern. There were rules that we'd never had. She had us both get medical check-ups, and my brother had an arm that had to be re-broken, because it had been broken and healed wrong the first time. He had to carry a bucket of sand around in order to straighten out some problem in his arm. And they found that he had a weak heart from one of these escapades of my mother running off with him when he was ill. So for him, she became like the villain, because she was doing what was best for him—really for both of us.

For me, she wasn't a villain by any means. She was not somebody that I really warmed

up to a lot, but she became my stepmother, and she wanted to help me do the things I wanted to do, and she was very good at that: she facilitated my life and brought order into it. I no longer had to take care of my brother, which was really good. I was able to go do my thing, which I started doing.

*She kind of relieved you of having to be the adult?*

That's right, and so we had a family then; we lived like a family, and there were very good times. We had all that stability of holidays and relatives and, you know, good things.

One of the things that we had was this great-aunt and uncle that my father had lived with on this dairy farm in Oklahoma. This was only thirty miles away, thirty-five maybe, on Highway 66. We went there often and it took all day. We went to the farm and that was just wonderful. We would always have farm cooking and pick things out of the garden, or gather the eggs, or go watch the cows being milked, or play circus up in the hay loft of the barn. So my brother and I did those things together, and then there were farm kids around, too. They had two or three houses of tenants that lived there. It was a big operation.

Then there were always one or two sisters of this great-aunt who were living there at the time too. It was a big two-story house, probably kind of Victorian-looking. All bedrooms upstairs. We slept on feather beds and put a hot iron wrapped in a towel at our feet at night to keep warm.

It was real *country*, country: we did everything in the kitchen. The kitchen had a table big enough to seat about twenty, because they had ranch hands during threshing time and harvesting time. The main stove was a big

metal stove that you put wood and corn cobs into for fuel and had a warming oven on the side. Eventually they had an electric stove, too, or a gas stove.

*But this was the cook stove? She cooked with heat from corn cobs?*

Yes. Corn cobs and wood. It had about eight burners on it—just huge. Anyway, the food was incredible. Oh, my! Big pecan groves along the creek. Go down and gather pecans every fall and make divinity for Christmas, make candy and pecan pie. Corn on the cob in the summertime. Just go right out in the field with my uncle and get the corn. And so that was really neat! They were like grandparents. We spent a lot of time down there. We'd stay overnight. Many times a year, we'd go down.

*Were holidays traditionally spent there, or did you have those in your home?*

No, they would be more likely to be down there.

And then my dad had a younger sister, Lucille Young, who also came up to Oklahoma when their family disintegrated. She went to teacher's college and started teaching. She was married for a short time, but then she was divorced. During this time that my mother then went off to the hospital and before my dad married my stepmother, she came and lived with us a year and taught in Joplin. Then she got an assignment to go to Japan and teach, which was really way out back then—to be a foreign exchange teacher in Japan. She went for about four or five years.

She became a big factor in my life, too. She came back to that area, taught in Joplin for awhile, lived with us part of the time. She had no children and really looked at my

brother and me as very special, and it was very special to us.

*She kind of brought the warmth, is that right?*

Right. She did, so she became a big piece of my life at that point in time, a part of that farm life too. She had grown up there, and she would always come back there. Later she moved to California and taught in California for years and years and years. She married a high-school sweetheart just about ten years before she died, named Lee, and became Lucille Young Lee. She just died about a year ago.

My great-aunt had all these sisters that kind of moved around the country in various places. They would show up here for various periods of time and they were all interesting, so there would be big groups of people there.

We would take eggs into town on Saturday to the people who owned the farm and then buy store-bought things. Didn't need a lot—sugar and coffee, but almost everything else was raised on the farm. So I got a chance to see that kind of life. It was great.

Now, my other grandparents, my mother's parents in Ohio—I had been back there as a child, on good trips, not just those two where we got picked up along the way by the police. There were very good memories there too. They lived on a farm and had a house with a tin roof, with the sound of rain coming down on the roof. The upper story had all of the gables and everything. It wasn't just a plain roof.

*Like an attic, with a slanted roof?*

Right. Like an attic, and I would stay up there and play house and stuff.

Oh, and I remember at the one in Oklahoma, she always had the most fabulous



magazines, like *Ladies Home Journal* or *Cosmopolitan* or *Country Living* or something. We didn't have that kind of thing at home, and so I enjoyed looking at all those things. My uncle was a really uneducated, kind of a rough man who just farmed and took care of this place, but loved to have us sit on his knee, and he played games with us and everything. So it was a real, real good atmosphere. I remember a lot of happy times there.

*So from about ten years old when life settled down and through high school, you had some happy times with family, even though there was not a warmth from your stepmom. Were you close to your dad during that time?*

No. You know, I wasn't. I mean, we never had problems. I think he was just gone most of the time trying to make a living, and so there just wasn't time to be close. But we did a lot of things together: like, as a child I remember us listening to the radio a lot. We had our favorite, "Hour of Charm," the Phil Spitalny all-girl orchestra that was on the radio on Saturday night, and we always listened to that. And then there were these serials, like "Jack Armstrong and the All American Boy," and I can't remember all of them, but we listened to the radio a lot. Then I got very involved in school, in activities and things.

My father was just always there, seeing that we had what we needed, kind of baseline. I remember never feeling poor, but never having the money for any extras of any kind. I mean, eating out was a real, real different thing. We did, but it was a real big deal when we did.

This insurance business that he went into, this was a time when many of the premiums were like five cents a week. These were little policies that he sold, that people bought and

wanted for burial purposes or whatever, in a really lower-income part of town. He literally went to these houses and collected the nickel on a weekly basis. That's the way they did it in those days. They had what they called a debit or a route, and he had this big book that had all of his accounts in it in the car. He went up to this house, and it was time for them to pay their nickel premium, or quarter premium—it was never much more than that—and then he would go home and mark it in these charts. I can see him pouring over this book at night at his desk.

A certain morning every week he had to show up at the office with this book in order, when all the other agents did the same thing. And he sold policies, and he dealt with the beneficiaries and all the things you do as an insurance person.

*Hard to see how he would have time to sell when he had to do all of this other too, collecting and everything.*

Well, when there was a new baby born, then you'd sell another policy. You build on the family and that kind of thing. But anyway, he was very successful. I mean, he really rose to the occasion. He educated himself. He was a charming man. He was fabulous, just quite handsome and really, really lots of grace and poise, and a good sense of humor.

He loved baseball, especially the Cardinals fighting the Yankees. Baseball was a big thing for him and Clarice. Well, they were just avid baseball fans, and so they would go to big league games in Kansas City or St. Louis or even New York. He became very active in a Lion's Club in Joplin, and he was elected to the gamut of offices, and at some point went to Lion's conventions. They'd always combine it with ball games. He was very active in our church, was on the board of trustees several

times, I'm sure, and was highly respected in the community. I'm sure all of that helped him sell insurance too. [laughter] The thing is, he was not a salesman in the usual sense. For having no education and everything, he was just a very genteel man, and I don't know how he managed sales. It just came naturally, I guess.

His other real passion was bird dogs and hunting and fishing. He didn't get to do much of that at all during the time we were growing up and he was trying to earn a living. Afterwards, he had twenty-five years of wonderful retirement. It was just really great! He raised bird dogs, and then he and his buddies would go pheasant hunting in Nebraska or right around there in southwestern Missouri. He knew all the places to go, and they'd go at three or four in the morning when the season opened.

So he liked animals and became involved with a group that created a Humane Society in Joplin, and they later built an animal shelter. There was no government-supported Humane Society at that point in time, so they created a non-profit one, and he was later honored for his part in that. He was just one of these people that got in there and helped make it happen. So he had all these community things that he enjoyed doing when he had the time.

I don't know how he felt about his job. It's too bad that we don't talk with people about the things that matter, but I remember him as always being of support to me and very proud of me. My getting married and having children was wonderful for him, and we could communicate about that. He and Clarice flew to Hawaii to be at our wedding in Honolulu. He'd never been in an airplane, and he did that, and they had a wonderful time, and they loved each other. And then we lived in Texas, so we would drive up to Joplin and visit with them, and they could come down to see us.

So there were some really good years with the grandchildren.

One summer both my daughters stayed there for a couple of weeks and rode a pony. They had five acres. They'd, at some point, moved out of Joplin, and he got someone to help him build a house after he retired. He raised a few white-faced cattle and had strawberries and tomatoes. So he'd lived the life he wanted to live, finally. It was fabulous, except for my brother who was just a constant source of pain for him. We don't need to dwell on that anymore.

He was very proud of me. He and Clarice sent me away to college, knowing that it was a good idea to get me out of Joplin and feeling that I needed to go away from home. They really made an effort to send me away when there was not a lot of money. I went away to girl's school in Oklahoma for two years, and then I would come back holidays and everything. They were very supportive of anything I did, until I went to work for the Red Cross after college. [laughter] Through my upbringing and under his blessing, I became very, very inclusive in my thinking and very open.

One of the things I did was help with Inter-racial Day for Girl Scouts. Joplin was segregated. I remember organizing the black and white girls playing games together at a rally. A lot of the people my dad collected from were black people, and he had all the respect in the world for them, and they loved him, and he was just really fabulous. But when the day came that I told him I was going to go visit this black guy in Rochester, New York, who I'd met when he was a patient in the hospital I was working at for the Red Cross, he really was unhappy, you know. That was his limit. It was the whole thing of: you want your daughter to have a happy life, and is she going to have a happy life if she gets mixed

up with a black guy? So I remember his really having deep caution. [laughter] Didn't say no, but really didn't want me to get involved. I mean, there were limits to which I should carry this thinking.

*That was the first time he really put the skids on anything?*

Yes. Right. Right. It was, but he was just great. He always, I think, was hurt that I didn't do my share of trying to help my brother, but he began to understand, particularly when it began to destroy him. We then would talk about the trust that he wanted to set up, and I helped in that.

We had some really good times together, when I went back before he died. By that time—that was in 1982—I had been through a big piece of my involvement in the women's movement and had become quite a different person, you know. I talked with him about that, and that was really fun—to go back and talk with him and to kind of say to him, “I think that you really believed in me and said I could do anything I wanted to do, because I've *done* it, you know. And it's all because of you.” And that was really neat.

*That's a neat time.*

Yes. [crying] It's good, because I wanted him to know that. [crying]

*You were glad you got that chance to say that to him?*

Right. I grew up in a family that just really did not communicate. I mean, my stepmother was doing her duty. They were communicating, but somehow we didn't learn how to communicate. And certainly not my brother; I don't know if he was

capable of it at the point. That was a bad beginning, [laughter/crying] because then I married somebody who didn't communicate either.

*Yes. Because that's what you knew?*

That's right.

*Yes. So learning to communicate has been a big issue all of your life, because it just wasn't there as you were growing up. There were lots of things going on, but nobody was talking very much about them.*

That's right. Nobody was. Or helping you talk about them.

So, anyway, my father died, and both my brother and I were there, and there was a wonderful service. Then my brother and I sat in the house, and he grumbled about how my dad had set up the trust with all the restrictions. [laughter] Anyway, we did the best we could. My father was really great, and I regret that I never knew him, the real person, better.

*Yes. Would it have even been possible, though, since he was kind of born and raised and lived during a time when you didn't talk about things?*

Well, yes. It's just that it didn't happen, because I went off and lived somewhere else. Sometimes we got together, and they came back and visited us, even in Las Vegas after the kids were born; but it was all, you know, superficial, good time, but not quality in-depth communication about feelings.

*Yes. So now you wish you had made or had more opportunities to ask him and talk to him about some of these things in more depth.*

Yes. I think he made my life happen, and he was always there, and I have really good feelings about it. And my mother, I just feel sad that she couldn't live a life. And my brother, it's terrible! It's really sad. It's a *wasted* life, and I don't know the answer to that one. I mean, part of it was medicine that he refused to take.

Just to kind of wrap up that childhood, I tried to think of other happy things that I remember—well, happy and sad things, OK? I think we've talked about one of the sad things, my mother's illness and how that evolved. Another thing that appeared, I think maybe in the latter part of junior high or high school, was that I really developed a major speech problem where I could not recite in class. I could not speak. I stuttered.

*And this is not something you had in grade school? It came in high school?*

I don't remember when exactly, but it became a major problem in high school. That became something that has been with me all my life.

*Was that in conversation, or was that in having to get up and give speeches?*

More having to speak, with others paying attention to you. I don't remember in just one-on-one conversation ever having much of a problem. Reciting in class, reading out loud from fixed words, any of that; I got to where I could not do it. I would go to the teacher and say, "Let me come in after class and recite for you, but don't call on me in class."

*You found ways to cope with it in high school?*

I did, like people do. I came up with substitute sounds and, you know, all the things that you do to psych yourself up.

*Did you have any speech therapy for it?*

Well, I'm trying to remember. I think they did send me to something, but it wasn't for any sustained time. I think that people felt it was not . . . I don't know. I can't answer that. But it became really devastating, because I was valedictorian of my class, and I had to give a talk at graduation. I didn't do a very good job. [laughter] I stuttered.

*You did do it?*

I did. And I just hated it, because I knew that I did a terrible job. Oh! It was a nightmare!

The other kind of negative that I remember up through high school was really wanting to be liked and recognized by more people than I was.

*Did you have friends, a group of friends?*

Well, I did. I did. And so now we can go into the list of good things, which is four times longer than the negatives. [laughter]

I wanted to be more popular, and I became known for my skills and all the good things I did, but didn't have a connection of being popular along with it or have close friendships.

*The valedictorian often is not the "in" kid.*

Yes. Right. Right. The nerd or the egghead or whatever. [laughter] I don't think I was quite at that point.

*They didn't call you names?*

No. They didn't call me names.

So, what were the good things that were going on? Dance lessons. I loved dance, and I took dance up through at least junior high. Dance academies were a big thing in Joplin, and you did big performances in the big downtown theaters, back when that's what you did was go to the movies.

*Was it classical dance, ballet and tap?*

Ballet and tap. Right. I was in every recital there was for, I don't know, twelve years probably, and all that went with that. And I liked that a lot.

*Did you ever think about going on and being a dancer?*

No. No. No. But that led into folk dancing, Contra dancing, ballroom dancing. I mean, I *love* to dance. I *love* to dance.

*So it developed into a very nice recreational interest?*

Right. Right. Girl Scouts became a very big piece of my life. I was a Brownie, and then a Junior, and then a Cadet, and then a Senior. I think Girl Scouts took the place of not having a mother and it gave me a place that I could compete, which I guess was in my genes from the beginning. I mean, this interest in organizing and doing, I did it in Girl Scouts. I sold more cookies than anybody else, because my dad was an insurance agent, and we did go along his route and sold cookies.

*You could go door-to-door with it, huh?*

That's right. And I'd take orders, and I'd go back and deliver when he went back to

collect money for the insurance. He would set me up in the main lobby of the bank building, where the Metropolitan office was, and I'd sell cookies right there by the elevator to all the other business people in town. So I got scholarships to go the camp from selling cookies, and then later on I went to camp. I *loved* going to camp. I started earning badges and I had tons of badges. I still have my sash. I showed it to my granddaughter this summer, who has now become a Girl Scout. That really filled a big void in my life. I could always, in my room, get out my Girl Scout book and start working on a new badge. I did that a lot.

*So it filled a space for you, both in family and achievement?*

Yes. Yes. It gave me a way to achieve, and the family helped me with it. I mean, I wasn't doing it all alone. Some of it was group activity.

Music. In the town I grew up in, there was a man who gave his life to music in the schools, and I was there during that era. He was the high school music teacher. His name was Frank Coulter. He created a regime . . . no, a world—a music world, a tied-together music system. There was one high school, three junior highs, and maybe eight or nine grade schools.

*And he was responsible for all of it?*

That's right. He initiated a program so that eventually everyone in fourth grade started to take instruments. You had grade school orchestras, and then when you got to junior high there were three junior high orchestras that fed into high school, where you had to compete to get in the class "A" symphony. Then there was a class "B" symphony in the high school; two symphony orchestras in the



high school, a mixed chorus, a madrigal group, music theory, and a drum and bugle corps for the athletic events. He masterminded all of that, and he created a system that for years worked.

I started playing violin in the fourth grade and continued up through junior high. When I got to high school, I had second chair in the orchestra my senior year. (I can't remember if I did junior year or not.) I sang in the mixed chorus. I sang in the madrigal group, and I sang in small trio ensembles. I played in a string trio which was violin, cello, and piano. My whole life was music in high school. My senior year I had English, Spanish, and four music classes, and there were a ton of people like me in class who did the same thing. I mean, we were *good*!

Music Appreciation was another class I had, and now when I drive down the road to Reno to work and listen to NPR [National Public Radio], there isn't hardly one classical piece that comes on that I didn't play. It was just an incredible background, and again, it was a world that kept me busy with lots of rehearsing, and I took private lessons. And then there were these music festivals all over, like in Oklahoma and Missouri and Kansas, and we competed in those, both in ensembles and as individuals. I think music was ten times more powerful in our school than athletics. I mean, we had a football team and everything, but it was incredible. He was just one of those people that was so motivated that he just created this whole world. There were lots of music stores with instruments. Lots of men and women teaching music.

*Was Joplin a small town?*

About 30,000. It was pretty good size.

*But that's kind of amazing. Not every town of 30,000 would have such a great system.*

It was incredible, and I really liked it. I was good to a point. And then I sang in the choir at church, and the guy who led the choir was just a master chorister. It was a very high quality thing. So I just had lots of music in my life, which I loved.

Church was also a kind of a positive and a negative. We went to the downtown Methodist church, the big traditional one. I became very active in the Methodist Youth Fellowship, and I'm sure I was President, Program Chair, Secretary, and everything else, and helped organize a lot of activities.

We got into a big fight with the trustees (I don't think my dad was on the board at that time) because they wouldn't let us roller skate in the basement of the church or folk dance. So it was a pretty conservative church. I look back to that. I really was not very religious. I went and I listened and I bought what they had to say to a point but I really went for the socialization and the ability to organize and be active in things, the opportunity to be around people and the music. The creed and the faith part, I really had some questions about, but it was over-balanced by the positives I got out of everything else. I didn't know that there was any place else to go, but I remember having questions about the spiritual side of it.

*Like what questions? Do you remember?*

Well, just the whole question of sin, and that we had to be redeemed by somebody else—an awful lot of what the Bible is all about. That really came to a head in college when I took a course called "Live Religious Issues" and found the Unitarian Church and knew that's where I belonged.

*What was it about that course and the Unitarian Church, in contrast to the Methodist Church?*

Well, just that the whole Unitarian philosophy is much more positive, humanistic. Let's not worry too much about what is beyond or who's in charge. It's more nature and people, and let's live our life on this earth in a way that is good and appropriate and respectful of other human life.

*And that made more sense to you than the sort of off-in-the-distance future, living for the after-life?*

That's right. Or having to fit into boxes that some supreme being told you you had to do. I didn't buy that.

*Yes. So church played a big role in your life, but not the philosophy of it. More the social part of it.*

Yes. But it was the social, organizational side. I helped organize the local ICYM, part of an ecumenical movement that was going on around the world then called the Interdenominational Christian Youth Movement; it was Christian, but it was ecumenical. Someone came to town with a piece of that, and I joined. I became an officer in the Joplin ICYM, and we did a lot of social action kinds of things. It was great, and I got to meet black kids who went to the African Methodist Church, and continued my involvement in that kind of thing. Through ICYM there was a scholarship program nationally that I competed for, and I won the national scholarship. That took me back to a big presentation ceremony in Michigan, where I had to speak.

*And how did that go? Because you didn't feel like speaking in front of groups.*

Well, I figured out ways to do it—just gimmicks—but I was terrible, because I couldn't do what I wanted to do.

*What were some of the gimmicks?*

Well, like you hold your breath or you start with a sound you know you can make. You only use words you think you can say. You know, there are certain sounds you can't do easily. I mean, it just becomes a horrible thing, but I did it.

*But you made yourself go do it. You never once thought about not doing it?*

No. But it was horrible. It was horrible.

And then I started in high school going to an interdenominational Methodist Camp in Fayetteville, Arkansas. It was a jurisdictional camp with a thousand young people. Just tons of folk dancing and hiking and crafts and workshops, and I just loved all of that. Vesper services—I loved putting those on too. I just didn't believe in all the content that was in there, but I loved organizing, singing and words—working on the newsletter. So, all of those things gave me a place to put my energy for organizing and doing things. [laughter]

*Then organizing and competition has always been a part of you?*

It's always been there.

*Did your father have it, too? You talked about him working with the Humane Society.*

Yes, and in Lions, so he had that skill too. He was so quiet about it. I think I was more aggressive. I was not quiet, and I think that's why I wasn't too popular. I just was one of

those who just rushed in and did it. My skills weren't too good at inter-relationships.

*You could see what you wanted done, what needed to be done.*

And I've always been there faster than other people, and I leave them behind sometimes, and then I lose. If you're out too far in front, nobody behind you could figure out what's going on. They'd lose interest pretty quick.

*You had to learn some of these skills?*

Oh, yes. Yes, I'm still learning those skills. [laughter] I'm still learning. But, you know, I have had that knack forever of being able to envision something happening, and then go make it happen—to be able to put the A-B-C to X-Y-Z together. There are mistakes along the way, and you learn how.

Well, and it took me a long time to realize that was a strength. [laughter] It became a weakness for awhile until I could balance it with some more social skills. I thought that was my way to become popular. That's not your way to become popular—to go do it better than anybody else. [laughter]

*So that is a hard lesson to learn? To do things better and to be out in front and be the leader wasn't going to endear you to the people you wanted to be friends with?*

Right. Right, it took me a long time to learn that. So those were the really good things. The other good things led me into college.

*You talked about being valedictorian in school. You were very busy with Girl Scouts and music and dance and church, and yet you were*

*valuedictorian. Do you remember doing a lot of studying, or did it come easily to you?*

It came real easy, but I studied even though I was just busy all the time. Obviously, part of that is that I was unhappy underneath. There was some instability there in my life, and I didn't quite know who I was or what it was all about. I can remember my father or my stepmother saying, "Why don't you slow down!" [laughter] But I just had too much to get done.

*Yes, and you talked about energy too. Were you a high-energy kid?*

Yes. Always.

*Because from everything that you're describing, that's a lot for a teenager to take on.*

Sure. That's right. Yes, and I did it.

*Were there any other studies that you particularly liked?*

Well, let's see. English, literature, writing. Creative writing. I liked little bits and pieces that I did. I liked doing that. I wrote for the school newspaper one year. Did not like math, ever—geometry and all that. I took typing in high school, which turned out to be a good thing.

*What about government, history? Did you like any of that?*

I don't recall much about that, no. It wasn't big. In fact, I must not have cared that much about it. Geography I must have liked, because I can remember those old maps of the United States with the contours and everything on them, and then my interest in places and



moving later. But no, I don't think I had much interest in history and government. It wasn't until we got to Las Vegas and I got involved in the League. I was very apolitical.

*We talked about community, and it seems like you had various communities. You had your church with your sense of community there, your Scouts, your music group. There were various ways that you were getting a sense of community.*

That's right. I had all of those. And then we had a family, even though it changed from time to time, and the extended family with this wonderful farm and all the people who came down there, and my aunt, who taught. So, yes. They were real warm, and I felt good about that.

*And that extended family stayed steady, even though your nuclear family changed?*

Yes, it did for the most part.

I worked as a teenager in the big department store downtown. At some point I started working on Saturdays in the notions department or lingerie. I think I made twenty-five cents an hour. That was for pin money, because I got an allowance. So, we had the basics but nothing extra.

Another big thing (how could I forget this?) was the *library*. [laughter] During those years when my mother was ill and we didn't know who was going to take care of us next, I can remember my dad taking me to the library with an armful of books and taking one armful back and getting a new one. I read every book they had. There was a nice Carnegie library in Joplin, so that became a pattern that I followed then.

*Do you remember what you liked to read at that age?*

I liked to read the career books about the girls, those series of girls being nurses or airline stewardesses or writers, and mysteries.

*In high school, were you thinking about career at all? Were you assuming you would go to college and have a career? When did you graduate high school?*

1947. Boys went off to war during my high school and college days.

*World War II and the Korean War.*

The boys took off to some of those young teenage Army and Navy programs, but that never personally affected me a great deal. I never had a really close relationship with anyone who was involved in the war. College—I guess I always expected to go but, boy, there was no counseling. There was no talk about it. There weren't SAT's. There wasn't any of that stuff then.

*And you didn't really know how you were going to do it? There wasn't a lot of extra money. Is that right?*

No. But my parents, by that time, they would have been instilling me with the fact that I would be going to college. We had a junior college in Joplin by that time, but they really made an extra effort to send me away, because I think they knew this whole socialization kind of thing, that it just would be better for me to go away and meet new people. I think they knew that I was unhappy as a teenager. I hadn't found my niche in town, I hadn't found my place. It would just be better to go away.

The one thing that I didn't mention, that I really later in life realized was missing, was a lot of communication about feelings. It was

not a family in which people shared how they felt, and this was not going to serve me well later in life. [laughter] I kept how I felt to myself most of the time, and so did everyone else. It wasn't a place where we talked out things in a family. We just dealt with them on the surface . . . like all the problems with my brother. My dad must have been going through *agony* with my mother being hospitalized that whole time, and, you know, we just never talked about how we felt.

*And so you came out of that family feeling like this is how people cope?*

Right. Right. That you keep it to yourself, and you figure out a way to compensate or go on, or whatever. I'm sure that was where my speech problem came from. I'm still not quite sure how, but later on I was able to really figure out that it wasn't anything physical, because when I got really engrossed in something—angry for instance—I could talk just fine. So I began to realize that it was something mental or emotional that was causing that problem.

*And probably left over from that family situation, where you didn't talk. You weren't supposed to talk.*

Yes. Right. Right, and yet I was confused about everything that was going on. [laughter]

*Sure. There was a lot going on.*

Right. Right. So anyway, that was a major element, but other than that, I have really, really good feelings about my childhood and growing up in Joplin.

*OK. And you came out with some very strong skills about organizing, being involved in groups and that type of thing?*

Yes. Yes, right, but I think that was probably in my genes or something. [laughter] I don't know, because I just always have done that.

*That is one of the things I wanted to know, if it was a way of coping with some difficult situations or personalities?*

Well, well, yes! Very definitely. I mentioned that I thought one of the ways to become popular was to do a lot and to do it better than anybody else. Well, I found out that wasn't really the case. But from the very beginning it was easy for me to organize things. [laughter] The more you do it, the more you learn how to do it. So, whether it was through scouts or church or school or interdenominational groups or whatever, every time I did it, I re-established a pattern of success, or I learned how to make it better. So it has served me well all my life.

Now, hopefully, in later life I've learned to temper that with a little more balance in other things. I can't remember much about how I worked with others then, but I don't think I did it nearly as well as I do now. [laughter].

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## COLLEGE YEARS AND RED CROSS WORKER

Basically, my parents chose my college. But again, there was no big deal where you searched the country for what school you were going to go to, because they didn't have much money. I went to Oklahoma College for Women (OCW), which was back in Chickasha, Oklahoma, just about twenty miles from Norman.

I'm not quite sure how they found out about it. Clarice had several brothers and sisters, and they were based in Oklahoma City, so there was another extended family. They were fun! It was really neat to get with them. They may have known about Chickasha—a small girl's school, about 700 girls, a campus with dorms and everything, and very inexpensive as living went at that point in time. That's what they felt they could afford, so that's where I went.

*Describe your first day.*

Well, I don't remember the first day, but I got assigned a roommate that I'd never met from a little Oklahoma town. We were in

the freshman dorm, and we both had our own beds, but we didn't have any bedspreads or anything. So one of the first things my roommate and I did was we went out and bought oil cloth. For some reason we thought it would be fun to make bedspreads out of oil cloth, so we went to the dime store and looked at all these patterns of oilcloth, and we made bedspreads out of it.

*And oilcloth is what? A lot of people don't know what that is anymore. I know what that is. We used to use it for a tablecloth.*

Oh, OK. [laughter] All right. How can we describe it? It was like a tablecloth. It's slick. Cold. It turned out not to be a very good bedspread. [laughter] Bright patterns on it and everything. Anyway, we did a bunch of stuff to fix our room up the way we wanted it. That was funny.

*Did you get along with your roommate?*

Yes, I did. Yes, it was a whole new world.

*Was it hard to be away from home? This was your first time to really be off on your own.*

No. I was fine. I did the usual freshman, sophomore stuff. I was there two years, and then went to SMU [Southern Methodist University] in Dallas. That had kind of been the plan all along, as I think about it. They thought, “Well, why don’t you start out here and see how you like it, and then we’ll see where you want to go after that.”

I was at OCW the two years. Earlier, I had also learned to play the piano, and I guess we had a piano. My brother took French horn. I was never a very good pianist, but I learned the basics. I took organ in college and continued to play my violin—not take lessons, but we had a double string quartet, called a sinfonietta, and I played in that the two years I was there. We went on tour the second year to other small colleges in Oklahoma and Kansas and Missouri. We came back to my home town, and I played in my home town church: I played second violin in this double string quartet, so I continued my love of music.

I played piano for a melodrama in college my freshman or sophomore year, where you do all the “Dum, dee, dum, dums.” [laughter] I could play that well. The highlight of my stay there was playing in an all-girl dance band.

*Like what you’d heard on the radio?*

Yes. That’s right. That’s right. We had a twelve-piece, all-girl dance band, the Swingsters. We played junior and senior proms all over Oklahoma. We got paid. And we played in VFW halls. Oklahoma was dry (no liquor sold) and we even played in a bar where they would let us know when the revenuers were coming, and we would shut down and go home. This was up over the dime store in Chickasha, Oklahoma. We wore gray

flannel jackets and bobby socks, and I have pictures of it. Blue skirts, white blouses, bow ties. We were sharp! [laughter]

*How fun! Well, you must have been in demand, if you played all over the state.*

Oh, we did. We played a lot, and I played piano. There were great musicians in this group; I mean, *really* great. I was not a great musician. We used the standard charts that you can buy at a music store that had the parts for everybody. I could never go beyond my part; I couldn’t improvise, take off on a run of whatever. I just *played* those chords [laughter] at a good rhythm. But some of the others were really good, so with me there as kind of the base, they could improvise and we were pretty good. It was really a *lot* of fun.

I was on a hockey team, field hockey. I did not like that particularly.

*Was it a requirement for P.E. [physical education]?*

Right. That was one of the options for P.E. I took Psychology and English, basics and stuff.

I continued to go to this Methodist youth camp that connected me with Methodist youth from Texas and Arkansas and Louisiana. I did not belong to a sorority. I did not go through rush. I don’t know why. I didn’t move in that circle, and it didn’t particularly disappoint me. I mean, I didn’t feel left out, because I had these other avenues in which I connected, through youth activities, church activities.

*You said when you’d left Joplin, you hadn’t really found your place in high school. You weren’t as popular as you wanted to be. Were you finding that popularity when you went to college?*

Yes. I felt more accepted by other people. Again, it would be the dance band group, and it would be the college Methodist group, because in a way I created or I picked places where there was a group connection. I still never had a lot of really close personal friends, but I felt satisfied, I think, with what I was doing.

The two summers before my sophomore and junior years of college I was a camp counselor for the Camp Fire Girls camp out of Ft. Worth, Texas. It was near Granbury, Texas, on the Brazos River, I believe. We were up on a big bluff overlooking the river, and that was a real growing-up experience.

We got there a week ahead of the campers. I was to be in charge of the junior high unit, which lived in screened cabins in the woods a quarter of a mile away from where the little kids were and another quarter of a mile away from the seniors, which were up on the top of the hill. I will never forget going there and meeting the rest of the people and getting the orientation for the work activities, and knowing that some of my group's activities included overnights, where you took off with your backpacks and sleeping bags and went off somewhere (there were a lot of acres of land you could explore), and my saying, "And, who goes with us?" The Director looked at me and said, "You're it." I mean, "You're in charge." [laughter] Oh, God! Oh, I still can remember my feeling of *awesome* responsibility at that point. [laughter] That I was in charge. That there was no one for me to go to and say, "How do we do this?" That was the *real experience*.

*Were you afraid?*

Yes! Yes! That was very frightening. I grew up. [laughter] I just started thinking a slightly

different line. But I did and things worked out, you know.

I was there in the junior high unit that year, but I met some wonderful people who were also counselors and camp directors. They had this cabin in the woods where the staff could go hide and let their hair down a little bit.

The next year I came back, and I was head of the senior unit, which was a *big* room that could sleep about twenty-five people on cots and had its own kitchen and was somewhat self-contained. Those two summers were really good experiences. I really liked that and still continued the same pattern of developing skills of organizing people and working with groups.

The new element that came with that was also getting acquainted with people who liked to drink, and buying bottles of Jack Daniels and taking them to the cabin in the woods and stuff like that. I had never been involved in any of that up to that point.

*So this was your first introduction to alcohol?*

That's right. I had really led a very sheltered life as far as those kinds of things were concerned. [laughter]

SMU was the church school in Dallas that I transferred to my junior year. It's a Methodist-sponsored, private university. I majored in sociology and took a lot of psychology and literature. I had taken Spanish in high school, and I guess I continued with that a little bit, although I never was very good.

*Why did you pick sociology for a major?*

Because I'm a people person. [laughter] Because I really now had all these years of experience since Girl Scouts, working with people, organizing, doing things. I liked

reading about the problems of people, the sociological issues of the day, like poverty. Process, how to work with people, how to make groups work. I liked that whole part of it a lot, so I liked sociology as a major. I had some really stimulating professors.

I got very involved in the Methodist Church in Dallas on campus and organized something called Religious Emphasis Week in the spring. I was one of the founders of that. Again, here I am not believing in the religious aspect very much, but finding a way to turn it into a project. [laughter] It was very successful. We got a whole ton of professors involved and students and clubs. For this week, professors would open their homes, and there'd be all these small group discussions about all kinds of things, from sociological topics to religious, to spiritual, to whatever, and with speakers on campus. It was just great!

*So, this was bringing in some of the other ideas that you were really craving. Is this at the same time you took that course?*

No. I took that my senior year, and I really then found the Unitarian Church was very appealing to me, but I remained active in the Methodist Youth (whatever it was called on campus, I've forgotten) because it was part of my social link.

*Yes. So, you didn't actually join the Unitarian Church until after college?*

No. Not until after I graduated.

*What was happening with your speech difficulties during these college years?*

I was having a lot of trouble.

*Were you making any progress with it?*

No. I just found ways to compensate, and in college you don't have to recite a lot, you know. I rarely would ever be the one up in front—like on these big event occasions, I was the one doing everything behind the scenes. I wouldn't be the facilitator. That came a lot later, when I became comfortable doing that.

*And while you were majoring in sociology, did you have in mind a certain career, a certain job that you wanted?*

Social work. Actually, I was thinking of either social work or being a religious education director in a church, so I could lead and organize all those things I'd been doing as a young person, but now as a job. It was very satisfying, and I knew I was good at it, so I liked doing it and was thinking of something in a group setting for work.

I remember thinking about whether to be a social worker. You really needed to go on and get a master's, even then, but there was no money for me to do that. I had partial scholarships, and I didn't have to work in college. I did do some odd job kind of things in the campus lab, but there was never any idea that I was going to get any more help from my parents beyond college. But also—this was really important—the whole feeling about going to college was, heaven forbid, that if I should ever have to take care of myself, I'd have something to fall back on.

*Because the attitude was that you weren't going to have to take care of yourself?*

That's right. That I would get married. There was always a very traditional thing. Even though I was given support for doing all the things I was doing, it was in a very traditional setting—that my real role in life



was to get married and have children and be a mother.

*And did you agree with that? Was that your attitude too?*

Yes. I bought that. I dated some people in college. I didn't have any real serious relationships with anyone.

*Was there a sense among the girls at that time in college that that's what they were there for, to find a guy? Find their husband?*

Yes. Very much. I mean, you didn't say it like that, but yes, and not too many people were looking at graduate school. Or if they were, it was just a continuation of that until-the-right-guy-came-along kind of thing.

*By the time you graduated, the right guy hadn't come along. Where did that leave you?*

I was thinking about getting a master's in social work, and I knew that I'd have to work and do that at the same time. I think I even looked into the University of Chicago, and probably went to the library and looked at what those options were.

A recruiter came through looking for people to join the Red Cross to work in military hospitals. For some reason that sounded interesting. I responded to that, and I was interviewed and hired. Here was an opportunity for a real live job. This was like the spring of my senior year. I graduated in 1951, so maybe the interview was in the fall of 1950, but it was toward the end. The idea of working in military hospitals was what I liked doing. It was organizing things. That sounded really interesting, and so I thought, "Well why not try that?" And it was

traveling. It wasn't staying home; it was going somewhere.

*You hadn't traveled much yet, other than back to Ohio to your grandparents, and yet travel appealed to you?*

Yes. I liked the idea of getting out and seeing other parts of the world.

*Did your father and your stepmother come to your graduation from college?*

My father came, and I think that my stepmother was not well enough to come.

*OK. And you graduated with honors, too?*

Just with honors in sociology. Yes, my dad came down, and we just had a nice time.

I was hired by the Red Cross to begin work in the late summer of 1951. In the meantime, the Methodist Church in some circles was getting very social-action oriented and had urban work camps in inner cities and things like that in the summertime. I heard about and applied to be a part of Methodist Youth Work Camp in New York City the summer after I graduated from college. We lived in an orphanage in Yonkers and fanned out during the day. There were about twenty-five of us from all over the country, men and women. We were all college students and some worked in vacation Bible schools. A guy from Florida and I were assigned to run a teen town in a black church in the Bronx. We went to work at ten in the morning and got off at ten at night, but some of the others went to work earlier.

We'd take the "el" or the subway, but we had to learn New York, and we lived in New York for six weeks. On weekends and other times we saw New York, sometimes as a



group and sometimes individually. This was great. We paid a twenty-five dollar activity fee for the six weeks, and then they put all the twenty-five dollars together, and out of that they bought group tickets to concerts and Broadway shows.

*This was your introduction to Broadway?*

Oh, gosh! Yes. Oh, it was incredible. What would it be? “Summertime,” “Old Man River.” What’s the show? “Porgy & Bess.” This was an *incredible* experience.

We traveled on the subways and the buses. We saw Father Devine, who was a charismatic guy. The IRS or the Feds wanted him, so he lived in New Jersey, and he would sneak into Harlem on the weekends and preach, and we went to hear him. We went to many different religious groups . . . Asian, Buddhist temple. That was all part of our experience—getting to know other religions, even though it was sponsored by the Methodist Church.

This guy and I ran this teen town in this big black church in the Bronx, and we did just what you do with teen towns—summer rec program—but the night part is when the young people would come. They were our age, some of them. Every night we ate in a different black family’s house in that part of the Bronx, and we had fried chicken and gravy, and I gained twenty pounds that summer. It was like Sunday dinner every night, because we were the guests, and so we ate like you would not believe. [laughter] Then we’d go back to the gym and do the night activities. At ten o’clock at night, when the teen town closed down, some nights we went home, which meant walking to the el, then riding across town on another bus, and finally taking the “A” train to Yonkers. We got in after everybody else was in bed.

There were kids in this church that were college kids, that went to CCNY and Drew University, and they took us to hear jazz. So we spent many nights at Birdland listening to George Shearing and other places down along Third Avenue. We just went to all these places and saw all the jazz people. This was 1951. Charlie Parker, and oh, just incredible groups! I started buying records, long-playing records (some of which I still have) and just had a great, great love of jazz. But here were people who could play it with us and could introduce us to the musicians. It was a *fabulous* experience.

There was a tone poem by Gordon Jenkins about New York, “Manhattan Towers.” It’s a big, long LP. “Manhattan Towers”—it’s about somebody living in New York and their life. And, oh, that was just like the Bible to me! I just *played* that tone poem. I got to know New York *intimately* that summer. We went to Carnegie Hall. We ate in big restaurants, and we did *everything* on twenty-five dollars! [laughter] Almost! For six weeks. *And* we realized we were integrated. We had black kids with us.

*Was this the first time for you to be in an integrated situation?*

Well, probably so. I don’t think there were any blacks at SMU when I was there. I don’t recall that at all. We talked a good game, but it didn’t happen. But this youth camp was integrated. We went to the Savoy in Harlem, “stomping at the Savoy.” We went there, and you felt perfectly safe. I mean, we would go in groups. We didn’t always go all twenty-five together, but you felt like you could move around that town *anywhere, anytime* of day or night. We became very familiar with the streets and how to get around, and we went to the beach and to these concerts that were

free if you got there by a certain time in some part of Central Park. I've forgotten what those were called. Or you paid a quarter. It was just constant culture and sociology. [laughter]

I communicated with many of those people for years that were in that group. We sang on the subways a lot, and we made a statement about being integrated, just by doing what we did. I remember when we left, the ones who were going to travel together down toward the Carolinas went on the same train. We talked about the fact that, very shortly after they left Washington (I don't know exactly where the point is that the Jim Crow laws came into play), they were going to have to say goodbye to each other and sit in separate coaches. And we accepted that for some reason. It wasn't the kind of idea of being a radical agent of change at that point. That was beyond our comprehension.

*So, you just accepted it?*

That's right, although certainly, in our being there and doing things, we were very inclusive and had demonstrated that to everybody around us. But that was OK in New York.

That was a very positive experience, and I have always loved New York. I didn't get back there for a long time. I got back there very briefly with my husband once to hear George Shearing—this is a riot—to hear George Shearing in a nightclub, when I was like eight months pregnant. We drove up from Washington, D.C., and I wanted George Shearing's autograph on my record. My husband just about died. Of course, George Shearing was blind and didn't know anything, but here was this pregnant woman going up to George Shearing, getting his autograph on my long-playing record that I might have bought that summer that I was in New York.

But then I wasn't back there for any length of time really until July 1980 when I went to a National Conference of State Legislatures at the Waldorf Astoria and the National Library Convention Conference, back-to-back. That was my first time to spend any time in New York since I had been there in 1951.

*Thirty years. Big changes!*

Yes and no. I went into this one part of town, and I knew when I walked around the corner that Carnegie Hall would be there. That's how intimate I became with New York in just six weeks, intensely living it.

*Yes, and loved every minute of it.*

I did. I did.

*New York obviously agreed with you. Did you ever think about moving there since you loved it so much?*

No. But, it was a great experience.

*You did that before you went into the Red Cross?*

Right. Right. In fact, I had to get a delayed permission not to start my job until fall, because I'd already been accepted. They thought it would be a good experience, which was wise thinking on their part. Then I went into Red Cross training. I've forgotten exactly when, but probably August or September 1951.

One of my thoughts about joining the Red Cross was to see the world. Well, I was assigned to Ft. Riley, Kansas, and that was a big disappointment. But what they did is, they assigned you in the region in which you lived and were hired, and my region was St.

Louis. Anyway, that's where I went. Well, that turned out to be a really positive experience, but my initial reaction was pretty dull. I don't know about this.

Basically, I was in the Red Cross until the summer of 1955. That was four years. I was at Ft. Riley for one year; I was at Fitzsimmons Army Hospital in Denver for one year; and I was at Tripler Army Hospital in Honolulu for two years.

There were two pieces to Red Cross; there were social workers and recreation workers. I was a recreational worker, meaning that my headquarters was the rec hall in the hospital which was run by the Red Cross. I supervised the Gray Ladies, the volunteers who came and did all kinds of things. In our case they arranged flowers and helped with birthday parties on the wards. We did not do social work.

I ran game nights—it was like a hostess in the USO kind of thing, but it was the Red Cross rec hall in the hospital. The ambulatory patients came down in their ambulatory outfits—blue coverall kinds of things that they wore. Lots were in wheelchairs and some were amputees, but a lot were just ambulatory, either waiting for tests or convalescing on their way out. Then there were sick people in the wards, and we took games and activities and parties and movies to the wards. So that was my job.

*Were these war years? Was this Korean conflict war years?*

Yes. Toward the end of the war, and Tripler was the dropping off point from the Far East. But Tripler was the last place I was at. Ft. Riley was a permanent Army camp for cavalry, so it was old-time Army. The buildings were all wooden barracks type buildings.

So I joined kind of the Red Cross family, and I was the youngest, of course, on the totem pole. It was fabulous. Because it was a regular Army post in a small town, you had to make your own fun, and we did. I just met an incredible, wonderful group of people. Charades and bridge became the activities of the day, but charades became big time. I mean, patients, faculty, officers, colonels—everybody did charades.

As a Red Cross worker, I was given officer status, so I belonged to the officers's club and lived in officer quarters. I had the opportunity to interact then with all the Medical Corps people.

*As well as with the people that you were working with, who were the enlisted men?*

As well as with the patients, right, plus community people who were the volunteers. So it was great! I mean, you know, it was my world. [laughter] I just kept building on the things I'd done earlier, and it was fun. You can be real creative. There were things about it I didn't like, but it was a great job and I became part of great people. I enjoyed the people and met a lot of new people and really liked working at Ft. Riley.

While I was stationed at Ft. Riley as a recreation worker at the hospital, we would often take patients to special events in the area. (Well, there weren't too many going on in that area. We did a lot more when we were in Denver.) One of significance was Eisenhower coming back from Europe, and this must have been 1952. I didn't look up all those dates, but he ran for President, I think, right almost immediately after that.

They had a homecoming in Abilene. That wasn't too far from Junction City, so I took a carload of ambulatory patients and we went to the actual event, where we pulled up in fields

of the farms in that area. It was organized so that thousands could show up, which they did. We were out there in these corn fields when he arrived and heard him talk and went through all the festivities that went on—kind of a victory celebration for him.

It was a fun trip, and I don't know how many miles, but it took us a couple of hours to get there, so we needed to stop and eat. I don't know what town, but we went to a restaurant and were rudely awakened that we were off the base [laughter] and that we couldn't eat there, because we were an integrated group with some Negro patients. Again it was just a *shock* to find that.

*Were you literally turned away or was there a sign?*

We were turned away. And isn't that funny? Because look at the event that was going on, celebrating this man coming home from having worked with the armed forces, which was clearly integrated at that time *within* the armed forces. But we accepted that. I mean, that was the custom, and none of us were ready to create a stink of some kind. I think we went to a market and bought some food and ate it in the car.

*Yes. It's similar to when you were in New York and came back.*

Right. Which had been only the year before.

*So this issue of segregation kept coming up?*

Yes. And how did I feel about that? Well, I just knew it wasn't right, but what was I going to do? It just wasn't in me at that point to challenge the system, partially because I was in charge of a group of men, [laughter]

and I was a woman. That could be part of it. The men accepted it. That was what society was doing at that point in time, but it certainly was uncomfortable. I wasn't in too many other situations like that for awhile. And certainly later on I became very involved in trying to integrate society. Actually, when we moved to Las Vegas that became a big issue.

I went from Fort Riley to Denver. I don't remember a lot of incidents there, except that's when I got to know personally a number of black patients and even got a little bit of personal involvement with a couple of them—wrote letters to them after they left the hospital and that kind of thing. By the time I got to Honolulu and Tripler, it was a pretty integrated society over there, so there was less reason to think about what we should be doing to integrate, because it was kind of happening.

Then I was reassigned to Fitzsimmons in Denver, which was a totally different, big institutional hospital for TB (tuberculosis) primarily. I don't know, there must have been several thousand patients there. We had to do a lot more taking the programs to the wards, because a lot of these guys were having lung surgery and were in very serious condition, and a lot of them didn't get out of it.

We took a lot of programming to the wards, had lots of movies and parties and games, and would squire entertainment around—big name entertainment like Bob Hope. One time I drove him in my car, and everybody wanted me to put a patch on the back seat of my car, "Where Bob Hope sat."

At Fitzsimmons they had a big craft center, and so I started making ceramic jewelry and that kind of thing. I just toyed around with hobbies. We had a much bigger staff, so there were a lot more young women my age. I connected with several of those, and

I went skiing. I learned I didn't like skiing, but I did try skiing while I was there. We went to concerts, and we ate out in fancy restaurants. I mean, we were making reasonably good money. Our room and board were taken care of on the base, so we had some expendable money.

I was there a year, and then one day they came to me and said, "We have two openings we'd like you to consider. One is Guam and the other one is Honolulu." For some reason they gave me a choice, and I decided on Honolulu. And I thought it was at the end of the earth.

*How did you get there?*

Oh, I got there on a troop ship from San Francisco, the U.S.S. Sergeant Mower. I had to go to Denver for some training and then to San Francisco by train. That's when I took the Union Pacific all the way from Denver to San Francisco, and I traveled through the Sierra. I had a sleeping car. That was so exciting to travel. That was my first visit to the West beyond Denver. When I was working in Denver, we went up to Winter Park and Estes Park, and we did some running around in Denver sightseeing, but I'd never been beyond there. So that train trip to San Francisco was just something else.

*What was your impression compared to Denver? Because that's a beautiful mountain area there.*

Yes, but it wasn't like the Sierra. This was really special.

So I got to San Francisco and took the troop ship, and on the troop ship was the most recent graduating class of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy—practically the whole class,

going to their assignments in Hawaii and points west.

*All male?*

Yes. And me.

*And how many other females?*

Not too many. Again, we were all in officer status, eating in the officers' mess, and speak about *party* time. We had a great time! Other than getting a little sea sick the first day out, as I recall. It was a *big* troop ship. I remained connected with a lot of those guys for quite awhile, because I was the link to lots of nurses [laughter] and Red Cross *girls* (which is what we called the whole Red Cross staff) and stuff at Tripler, and they were down at the Coast Guard station. But anyway, that was an experience going over on the ship.

Tripler is a big, pink stucco building up in the hills, a beautiful hospital. We lived in officer quarters up above it right next to the officers' club. We had a big rec hall down closer to the hospital, and I continued being a recreation worker in a staff of about five there from 1953 to 1955.

*Yes. Was this a big hospital?*

*Big* hospital. This had a lot more orthopedics, a lot of amputees. Well, just everything. Recreation in Honolulu meant also taking guys down to the beach, and again bringing entertainers in and taking ambulatory people and planning activities for them to get out. We'd get free tickets to a lot of stuff. It was that kind of job, and I liked it a lot.

I learned how to play the ukulele and played tons of bridge—became a really big bridge player—with the military. Played duplicate bridge and met my future husband,

Sam Ford. He came the second year I was there. He came as part of the intern class coming in, having just graduated from medical school. I taught him how to play the ukulele, and we had a ukulele club where we had group lessons. He joined that, as did a bunch of the other guys. We were part of a big social set of young interns, nurses and Red Cross people. We worked shifts and everything, but when we could all get off together, we went down to the beach.

I bought a 1941 Chevrolet Coupe, which had belonged to various people at Tripler for eons, since 1941, and that was covered with rust from the salt water. But somebody was reassigned, and it was my turn to buy the car, so I got it for some small amount and that was our ticket to the beach. We met up with other people who liked to play the ukulele, and we took lessons from a Tahitian woman on Tahitian music, and we created a whole group. There'd be like twenty of us driving clear around the island to her house on a regular basis, and she would teach us Tahitian songs and dances.

I took hula lessons at the YWCA in downtown Honolulu. I took Chinese cooking. I have Lauhala mats here in the house that I made in the craft classes down at the Y in Honolulu. There was just this big social group that did all these things. Hiking—we joined a Hawaiian hiking club, and we'd go up in the hills. It was great fun. A great, great life.





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## MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

I met my future husband my second year in Hawaii. The intern group arrived in July or August. We already had this ukulele class going that a whole group of us were doing once a week, and we had a Hawaiian woman that was working with us on that. I think I became kind of the coordinator of the group and had my own ukulele and started a notebook with all the songs. We got really good at the Hawaiian songs, and when the new intern group came, of course, the old ones left. [laughter] So then a whole new social set emerged between the nurses and the Red Cross and the incoming physicians.

I met Sam, who had been at U.S.C. Medical School and before that attended Pomona College. He had been born in Ohio, but his parents had moved to Grand Island, Nebraska, and then to L.A., and he had gone to school in L.A., with college and medical school in that area. He came over to Tripler as an intern, and we got acquainted fairly soon. It was part of that group, and we somewhat singled each other out and started dating.

I was still dating some of Coast Guard guys that I'd met on the troop ship the year before. It was really a great place to socialize. [laughter] You know, we were all in demand and had a lot of fun. It was a very camaraderie kind of thing because of the situation we were in.

*So a date didn't necessarily mean something serious right off the bat?*

That's right, and they often were not just one-on-one. It was often a gang of people. A lot of time was spent going to the beach to participate in jam sessions on the beach, because we now had our ukuleles and felt like we knew something.

There were a number of regular jam sessions that went on down at Waikiki, which was about a half hour from the hospital. Rec hall didn't close till ten o'clock at night, so there would be a group of us on the nights that we worked until ten that would then jump into my car. There were others who had their little cars, and we would go to the beach, and

we would join up with Hawaiians and Chinese and others that liked to play and do Hawaiian music. We'd stay down there *late*, because then we didn't have to go to work maybe until late the next day, some of us. Now, the interns had their own schedules, so this was a little tricky. [laughter]

Oh, gosh! It was awful! But it was really a fun time. We hiked, and we went out with the Hawaiian hiking club, which was an organized group that went on weekends. We went to all the festivals that cultural groups put on, took lessons at the Y in Chinese cooking and Lauhala weaving and hula. Sam and I took lessons in comic hula, which is what the older people did, and we got real good at that. Even after we got back and lived in Las Vegas, we would perform at luaus and do the comic hula.

By Christmas time or January or so, we were seriously thinking about getting married, and we did get married on April 9, 1955 in a chapel at the hospital. It was a military wedding, and my parents flew over from Missouri, my dad and my stepmother. They were very excited. My dad had never flown and they had a great time. Sam's mother broke her wrist a few weeks before the wedding, so his parents did not come to the wedding.

*Had you met them before this?*

No. We had not met. We had exchanged letters, I guess, and that kind of thing by then.

The wedding was a real great event. I had a gorgeous dress—pale, pale pink—and two bride's maids. Sam had two attendants, and they were all the guys at the hospital. Some were interns with him and some were staff. We had a reception at the officers' club up the hill from the base chapel, and the beach boys, some of the jam groups, came up and played

at the reception. So we had Hawaiian music, and we joined them in some of the playing and that was a lot of fun.

*Was it a large group that came to your wedding then?*

Oh, yes. Well, the chapel probably held a hundred people or more. Probably there were that many or more at the reception.

Then we drove down the hill to the airport where we took a plane to Kauai. Everybody threw rice at us, and the rice got in the ukuleles that we were carrying. We trailed the rice all the way into the plane, so there was no question on the plane that we were honeymooners. We stayed at the Coco Palms Resort on Kauai. We were there not very long, three or four days. And so it was a real fun event.

*Tell me a little bit about Sam and what attracted you to him. You said you kind of had a mutual singling out of each other.*

Yes. Yes. He was just really nice. Intellectually, we could talk about things. He loved doing all the Hawaiian stuff. He liked the out-of-doors, the hiking. We played bridge. Everybody played bridge. That was the social thing, and he was a lot better at that than I was, but we were compatible enough that we made a good team. I don't know. I just enjoyed being around him, so we gravitated to each other a lot.

As I look back, I can see that for both of us, we were getting to an age where we knew that marriage was supposed to be in the cards for us, and our parents were interested in knowing who we were seeing and all this kind of stuff. He now was free to explore the world of something besides medical school and school, which he had been at for years

and years. This was his first chance to do something different.

*Yes. And so you were feeling some pressure from friends and family?*

That's right. I think that we both were feeling pressure from friends, family and society that it was time to settle down. Then you start looking at the people you're with a little more carefully with that in mind. [laughter] I think that had a lot to do with it.

*OK. At the time, were you thinking in terms of having a long-term career, or was this other pressure coming in real strong?*

No. That's why I say that I had thought about working on this master's in social work, because I've always liked *doing* things and being active in work, but also this wasn't a conscious thing: "Well, no man's yet come along, so now I'll go work on my master's." But yet it was there. That was society. That was the way I was raised—that very traditional upbringing, that I would get married and have a family.

*And it was not only the upbringing, but it was also the era, was it?*

Right. That's what I mean. Everything permeated that. Later on, years later, when I went back to work on my master's in the seventies at UNLV, I went to a career center on campus and took one of those preference tests. I had done that in earlier years, somewhere along the way, but this one showed just an extraordinary tendency that I should have gone to law school. Law school was not an option that I ever considered. Now, there *were* women attorneys. Obviously, I now know there were women attorneys even before 1900.

But in my family and my arena that I moved in, for a woman to go to law school was not an option. That never occurred to me to do something like that. Something like social work or being a rec director of a church, that fit more with the kind of world that I had moved in outside the home and that could use my organizing skills. I didn't gravitate toward being a secretary, and I never really seriously thought about being a teacher for some reason, which is kind of interesting, because so much of what I've done is teaching in an informal sense.

The Red Cross allowed me to use all these organizing skills in a wide range of ways, from very serious programming to parties and field trips, to lots of stuff, and I did well at that. But I was thrilled to get married and leave that, because now I was going to live part of the destiny that my life was supposed to be.

*Did you give up your Red Cross job when you married?*

I resigned at the end of the summer of 1955, when Sam's year of internship ended, and now I am an appendage to my husband. I began to really realize *that* in a few years, but that was what I wanted. That was it. So my life had to fit with his, and I really probably couldn't have stayed with the Red Cross, because I would have been assigned other places.

After we were married, everybody knew that I would leave when he left at the end of the year. His plan then was to take a residency in the Army. His plan evolved during that year that he wanted to specialize in dermatology, and then he went through a process of applying for a residency in dermatology in the Army and getting accepted at Walter Reed General Hospital in Washington, D.C. I think always there was a year of waiting to

get into that residency, so you were assigned somewhere simply to function as a physician. His assignment was Brooke General Hospital in San Antonio, Texas.

*So that between the time you were married, April and the end of the summer, you were still there in Hawaii. Was life still pretty much the way it had been before you were married?*

Oh, no. It was different, because we had an apartment down in Waikiki. [laughter] Before we had both lived in the officers' quarters, and so we were in kind of adjacent dorms up on the hill. But we got this apartment in Waikiki and we commuted. It was great. It was fun. We entertained people there and still connected with the social group. In fact, there were two other weddings of couples like us from the same set of interns, and so there was lots of socializing going on.

Oh, and I have to back up and say something about my impression of Hawaii. When I was given this opportunity to go either to Guam or Honolulu, I truly thought Guam was the end of the earth and Honolulu wasn't far behind. I mean, I really thought I was going to a very foreign land that was not very Americanized. Now, this was not a state; it was still a territory. So I went on this shopping spree in San Francisco before I left, and I bought things I thought I'd never be able to find there. They told me that my tour there would be two years. (When they send you overseas, they get a little more structured.) I bought crinoline petticoats, because that was the era in which we were wearing crinoline petticoats underneath full skirts, and just a range of mundane clothing that I thought I'd never find in Hawaii. I mean, I was *so* naïve.

*You were leaving forever?*

That's right. I was going overseas. So I took all of this stuff, and when I got over there, there was McInerney's Department Store and Liberty House—*beautiful* stores, shopping centers, malls—it was an *urban* city. Honolulu must have been two or three hundred thousand people at least. It was *very* civilized, and I had no clue. I'd been living in this really kind of very closed-in existence. [laughter] Except for New York. But anyway, it was funny when I realized what I was thinking.

So we got the apartment. It was a very modern, five-story building in downtown Waikiki, and it was furnished, and our wedding gifts were almost totally Hawaiian. We got monkey pod plates, monkey pod salad bowls. The prisoners at the state prison in Honolulu made gorgeous monkey pod crafts very inexpensively. We had gone shopping there, even to buy gifts before we were married. Ivory jewelry was another really very special thing there—a place called Ming's, that if you got a piece of ivory from Ming's, you knew you'd arrived—so we gave each other ivory gifts from Ming's and Lauhala mats.

Most of our wedding gifts were from around the islands. We just loved the islands and everything about them, and we got into the history of the islands and the Bishop Museum. I started taking slides there and still have my colored slides of the fifties in Honolulu, with the poinsettias at Christmas time and the flowering trees, and it was just a *fabulous* place.

*Tell me what a Lauhala mat is. I don't know, and maybe some others don't.*

Well, Lauhala is a tree that has kind of long, spindly leaves to it, and they take those leaves and weave them into placemats and put them over foam to make a hotplate, things you

put hot dishes on. You even can make Lauhala rugs, Lauhala mats big enough for a room, like for a beach house or something like that.

So we had this lovely modern apartment and all of our monkey pod stuff. A couple of things I remember about entertaining, because I had not had my own things before. (Well, in the Red Cross, we had kitchens that were available to us, but it was pretty sketchy, the kinds of stuff we did.) One of the first things we did was entertain some friends and had steak and ate it on the monkey pod plates with steak knives and ruined them. I mean, here were the serrated edges just going right into the monkey pod. [laughter] That was kind of a blow. We had to deal with that and kind of get them sanded down and start over again with the monkey pod, use them as an under plate, and you'd use a service plate on top.

I really wanted to cook. I was going to be this perfect homemaker, and so I was trying out recipes and stuff. I made Spanish rice and I somehow didn't put the water in or didn't handle the rice right. Anyway, it came out hard as a rock. It was just really awful! So there were some early cooking experiments that didn't go well at all.

*How did the two of you handle those? Did you laugh or cry?*

Well we laughed, but this began a whole period of adjustment to marriage, of which there were some real highs and some real lows that first year. There were some communication issues between us as we dated and decided we were going to get married, that I felt would just totally go away the day we got married. That somehow, some real transformation took place and we would both know how to be husband and wife. And it was a real blow, over time, to find out that that didn't happen.

I didn't question that he loved me, but he didn't show some attention the way that he should—this is a common story. He loved to read. I mean, he read the Wall Street Journal and two or three newspapers. He was just a brilliant guy and just very intellectually oriented—spent a lot of time reading and would read the local newspapers from cover to cover. I remember one time spending hours on a special fruit bowl in a pineapple, where I just knocked myself out working on this, and he ate the whole thing without ever looking at it. He read the paper the *whole* time. He didn't even know what he'd eaten. [laughter] And that happened quite a bit. He was very content, very happy with what was going on. It's just that making sure to give me special attention wasn't part of his agenda, and somehow I thought that came with marriage. [laughter]

Even before we left Honolulu, we got into some pretty stormy . . . I wouldn't say fights. It was more like my becoming very silent and his knowing something was wrong. Then my waiting until he could say, "Well, OK, what's wrong?" And then finally, I'd say, "Well, you didn't do this, or you didn't say that," or whatever some of these things were I had expected. It would end in tears, and then we'd make up.

He'd say, "Well, but you know I love you," and all this stuff. We started through this whole round that really went on for over a year, that really became worse when we got into Texas. And, you know, I began to wonder what marriage was all about. [laughter] I'm sure he did, too, because I wasn't too good to be around some of those times. But most of what we did over there was really a lot of fun, and we had great groups.

A really funny thing happened with my parents when they came over for the wedding.



It was a whole new world to them, and to my dad particularly. This was just really foreign to Missouri and raising cows and strawberries and stuff down in his little five acres. Well, he had done some traveling, just in the United States while in the Army and working on the train. But when he settled down in Joplin, he really settled down and was there pretty much, except for pheasant hunting up into Nebraska, or something like that. But he'd never been to Hawaii.

We said they should stay in our apartment while we were on our honeymoon. I think they'd stayed up in the officers' club guest quarters until we got married. That was some distance away, and they were still going to stay a couple of days and enjoy the beach and do things that they couldn't do while we were there. All the wedding gifts were there—we didn't open any of those till we got back—so the apartment was just loaded with wedding gifts and stuff. But they left us a note—they were actually gone when we got back. They said that they really had a good time, and they described all the things they did, and they said, "But we have to confess that today noon, we went to the drugstore down in Waikiki, and we had a bacon, lettuce, and tomato sandwich." We'd been doing nothing but eating Hawaiian food, or island food and exotic stuff. They were real plain eaters, and so it was funny to picture them going to get a bacon, lettuce, and tomato sandwich, finally, when they didn't have to eat fancy food anymore.

We went to a lot of Japanese open houses on New Year's Day and ate sushi, and to Chinese weddings, and we met a lot of Samoan people and Tahitian people. For awhile we took Tahitian dancing and Tahitian singing lessons and got pretty good at that. So we were just kind of immersing ourselves in the culture. A lot of my work was involved

in bringing those cultural groups into the hospital or taking patients to see what was going on in the community, so it all blended together.

Back in college, I'd taken this course, "Live Religious Issues," which had led me to the Unitarian Church. In Kansas there was no Unitarian Church, and I don't recall that I did anything church-wise—maybe went to the base chapel. In Denver, I did go to the Unitarian Church, so that began a pattern then. It was a very nice, downtown church. I wasn't active at all, because my schedule was a lot of weekend work. In Honolulu, that was something that Sam and I both agreed on, was the kind of general principles that we found in the Unitarian Church. He had been raised in the Presbyterian Church, and I'd been raised in the Methodist Church, but we seemed to agree that neither of those really strongly met our needs. I can't remember if I talked him into going with me, but Unitarians met in a house in Honolulu that was also used by a Jewish congregation as their meeting place. It actually had a little organ, and I played the organ for the services. When we could, we went to the Unitarian Church, and we both liked that a lot.

We made plans to come back to the Mainland, which we did, and then we went to L.A.

*Were you sorry to leave the island?*

Yes, in a way; but no, because it was now my new life. We considered later trying to go back there, when we were in San Antonio looking for where we wanted to settle down. We both loved the islands, but it's a very closed medical community. Everybody works in groups, and you almost have to be born into

the group, so it's very hard to break in as an outsider and it's very expensive to live there.

We went to L.A. on our way to San Antonio, and I met Sam's parents, and so that was a big occasion. They were living in El Monte, and they were very nice. One thing that was really funny was how Sam would describe to me this beautiful basin of Los Angeles and the mountains, and that I would really enjoy all this. We were there, I don't know, probably two weeks before I saw the mountains once. The smog was horrible! He remembered it as a child moving into the L.A. basin with the orange groves and the clear sky. He was so shocked when we got back to L.A., to see what it was like, because he just hadn't realized. Of course, we'd been in Honolulu, which was a totally different kind of atmosphere.

While we were there, he had to take some boards of some kind, some examination at the Biltmore at downtown L.A., and I had my first experience in big city driving, and that's a story. I drove our car down to meet him. Oh, it was awful, trying to figure out what freeway, what lane, what speed, everything. But I finally made it. It was real frightening, already in 1955.

I had sold my car to someone coming up in the social group at the hospital in Honolulu. One of the first things we did when we got to L.A. was buy a car, and we bought a Volkswagen—a little bug. And Sam's brother was living there then, too, and he bought a Volkswagen. So we both had Volkswagens. We paid, I think, \$1,400.00 for it, and it still had the little window in the back. It didn't have the little turn signal on the side that flipped out. That was one or two years before us, but we were still one of the earliest models. In L.A. in those days, people with Volkswagens would toot at each other at street corners, at intersections, because that's how early the

whole thing was. It was just like a toy, but it was fabulous and we just loved it. My husband actually had it until about five years ago. We had it all through everything.

So that was exciting to get our car, and spend time with his parents and some other relatives there. We maybe went to my family's house, too, and ended up in San Antonio in August. He had to report in for duty at the Brooke General Hospital. We were going to be there just nine or ten months, because then he already knew he had his residency starting in Walter Reed in Washington, D.C. the following year. This was just kind of a transition year.

We got an unfurnished apartment, so we had to buy a bed and a dining room table and chairs. Everything else we had was Hawaiian—a big hemp rug that we brought from Hawaii. And we had a Tiki, about five foot tall; this is a Hawaiian god carved out of tree roots. We had that in our living room. And the green balls with the netting around them that the fishermen use in Japan as floats. We had those, and we had the most exotic apartment. It was like right out of Trader Vic's or something. We had a monkey pod table, a coffee table that was like three feet long on little wrought-iron legs. We ate on the floor on this mat, sitting on Japanese cushions, on this monkey pod table. I've got pictures of that.

Of course, we entertained by making curry and Japanese sukiyaki and stuff like that. So we were still living the Hawaiian life, you know. Most of our wedding gifts were all Hawaiian, and, yes, it looked pretty funny in San Antonio.

I worked part-time at a stationers store downtown selling greeting cards, and I became pregnant in about January. We were pretty excited about that. We were still going through lots of, "Why didn't you tell me you loved me yesterday, when you knew I looked



sad?” kind of stuff. [laughter] And he was just absolutely in consternation, like “Well, what am I supposed to do with this woman?”

We had some talks about all that, but I think getting pregnant produced another level of thinking and concern for the future. [laughter] We really arrived at an accommodation that year which lasted for twenty-two years, that was in many ways very beautiful.

*Can you describe it?*

Well, it was just that we both wanted the marriage to work. We had been raised that when you got married, you’re married for life. We were very compatible in all the superficial ways, and now we were going to have a child, so we needed to prepare to do that properly. I submerged my need for attention—the demonstrative love kinds of things—and he put up with that. We both arrived at certain things that we felt we needed to do, without talking about it *at all*. [laughter] We just dropped some of the things that we were having difficulty over and went on.

It worked to the point that I can say I feel that we had twenty-two years of a good marriage. Now, we both began to realize there was more to life and marriage than that—that there were needs for deeper relationships and deeper connections. I don’t know when my husband starting realizing that, but I did in the seventies, and we’d been married twenty years. When I say very happy . . . superficially, for all intents and purposes, we were. We were very successful at what we did, and when we finally did get a divorce, we were one of those couples that people said, “My God! If Jean and Sam are getting a divorce, then what is *left*?” you know. It looked very good. And *it was*, for the most part.

So anyway, we got ready to have this baby and move to Washington. We drove our VW to Washington in the summer, while I was like eight months pregnant or so. We went through Kentucky, because Sam wanted to see Lexington and its race tracks. He and his mother had really gone to the race tracks in southern California a lot when he was in medical school. His mother loved the races. That was a big, big thing of theirs, going to the race track. His father was a butcher. He had worked in a meat packing plant in Grand Island. When they came to L.A., he eventually got a job at Safeway. He was like a night supervisor of the meat part of the market and worked nights almost always, and so their life was quite separate. His mother had her own things she did, and his father came home and slept all day.

*But you were saying he wanted to go to Lexington to see the race horses?*

Because going to the races was his mother’s thing. I mean, she *loved* it with Sam, and he was much closer to her than he was to his father, I think. So we drove on these bumpy country roads in Kentucky.

I still had relatives in Ohio then—I guess both my grandparents were there then. My mother was in a hospital somewhere back in Missouri. We may have stopped and seen her on that trip. Sam was very supportive and very interested in helping me do whatever I needed to do to connect with my mother. My parents loved Sam, and we had lots of good times together.

So we got to Washington. We got an apartment in Langley Park, Maryland, a *brand new* apartment. We added a couple of pieces of furniture, and kept all our Hawaiian stuff, bought a crib and Janet was three weeks late. She was due in the end of August, and she

arrived on the thirteenth of September 1956. I was miserable, and I was finally induced at the end of three weeks. She weighed ten pounds, three ounces. *Big girl*. She was born at Walter Reed hospital.

In the Army, you could gain only so many pounds. It was a very strict, strict kind of regimen. I was scared to death, particularly after she was late. I do not remember it as a happy experience at all, her birth, but it was great to have her come and she was beautiful. Then that started another whole piece of our lives.

*Yes. When you're saying it wasn't a happy experience, it was primarily because of the military regime and the pain and so on?*

Yes. Well, we weren't a part of any natural childbirth groups or anything. I went to the Army doctor, and they dealt with me, and everything looked fine. Then I just went to the hospital, and they gave me certain kinds of anesthetic and stuff.

*Were you even aware when she was born?*

No, I don't think I was. It was the old style childbirth.

She had her own room in our apartment, and I was in bed for several days, just uncomfortable and getting used to it. Sam gave her a bath, and she was in a bassinet in her room, while I read him the directions on how to do it out of the *Better Homes and Gardens* baby book. We just got the books and everything.

But the big blow for me that fall came very quickly, when I realized my husband—the doctor—knew no more about raising a baby than I did. Somehow I thought that would go with being a doctor, that he would know, and he didn't. And here we were, *scared to death!*

I mean, I was very apprehensive. I loved her being there, but Dr. Spock was read daily. What do you do when they cry? And she cried quite a bit. I remember the first time she had what I think they call Roseola, which is a little baby illness that crops up quickly and has a real high fever, and then goes away about as quickly. But you don't know that. Sam stood in this shower with ice water coming out of the showerhead, holding her to try to bring her temperature down. He did know all the bad things that can happen to kids. He didn't know how to manage crying and all that, but he knew a lot more than I did about how dangerous a fever was, so he stood in this just cold water until the fever came down, and we just coped with trying to be parents. And it was hard.

*Did you mostly learn from Dr. Spock?*

We did, from several books like that. Right.

*And what was kind of the basis of the theory of Dr. Spock?*

It was fairly regimented. It was. I mean, you got a routine. It wasn't feed on demand and that kind of thing. You need to come up with this pattern and things will fall into place.

*And the baby will adjust to the pattern?*

Right. [laughter] Well, it was a very short time after she was born that we had some scales on one of those metal carts, like a utility cart, in her room. I had her on the scales, and she rolled off onto the floor, between the scales and the wall. She literally fell on her head. This was in the first month; I can't remember exactly when. Here I am at home, and Sam did not like to be called at work—not that I'd

done it a lot, it was just that you just didn't call unless it's a true emergency. Well, I called him at work. And this has been a family story for years and years. I said, "I'm sorry to bother you, but I just dropped Janet on her head." [laughter]

There was a little pause on the phone. He said, "So you dropped Janet on her head." That's the way he was—just total calm always, and I found that very comforting, always. I felt like he could deal with anything. I found out later that he was a little bit more vulnerable than I realized, but at that point in life, I thought he could solve anything. So anyway, [laughter] we talked about this. Basically, I watched her for the next few hours to see if tell-tale bruises arrived at certain places that would indicate concussion. Actually, they did, but not to the point that there was a problem. We didn't do anything. She was OK, but it was pretty scary. We went through the trials of being parents, and also the grandparents came.

*Do you remember when it started to get more comfortable?*

Oh, it wasn't very comfortable the whole first year, until she got to be up and crawling and walking, kind of a toddler. Then I breathed a little, I guess. [laughter]

Then I became pregnant again. They were seventeen months apart and we liked that idea. Neither of them were what I'd call exactly planned, but we liked having the second one fairly close. I don't recall being disappointed that she was a girl. Most people think that they want their first one to be a boy, but I definitely wanted the second one to be a girl, and it was. We were real happy about that.

During that year, I continued my launch into being the perfect homemaker and the perfect mom. We acquired more electrical equipment, like mixers and things you need.

[laughter] We completed our household inventory of electrical stuff and dishes and enough furniture to be adequate. We still had the kind of early Hawaiian decor.

A big purchase was the sewing machine. We bought this sewing machine at the department store near where we lived, and I took lessons. I threw myself hook, line, and sinker into sewing, because it's something I could do at home with the kids. First I started making all of Janet's things, and then as Carla came along I made clothes for both of them, often that were identical. I made a sportcoat for Sam, almost all of my clothes.

Until we really moved to Nevada, sewing was a huge piece of my life. I had a room in San Antonio where I had just the ironing board and the sewing machine. The kids slept in the same room, so that I could have the whole room to devote to this sewing. Washington's where I started sewing, where I got the machine, but then when we moved back to San Antonio, we had a house. Our payback time for the Army was in San Antonio again for three years.

*And what is payback time?*

Well, his residency in dermatology was a three-year residency. We had to pay back a year for every year of residency by staying in the Army. We were reassigned to San Antonio. He was Assistant Chief of Dermatology in Brooke General Hospital in San Antonio.

So my life became taking care of the baby, sewing, and interior decorating to the point that we could. We didn't have a lot of money, and so it was more little decor kinds of things. I took all those magazines like *House Beautiful* and clipped things for my dream house, someday.

*Did you have files for your clips?*

Oh, yes. Absolutely! And recipes. I was organizing the house.

Gourmet cooking became a very big thing. We belonged to gourmet cooking groups where we took turns. We would take the baby, and she would sleep in the drawer of a dresser in the apartment complex or in someone else's house. So we had our gourmet club meeting and played bridge—it was just very typical white, middle class living—[laughter] the way I thought it was supposed to be. Sam enjoyed the cooking a little bit. He helped me with some things. I remember one time I was trying to make Baklava. Oh, my gosh! We got the rose water and the honey and the nuts and the filo dough, and what a mess! It took us all night, you know. So we did that *only once*. [laughter] But other things I got really good at, and I got *The Gourmet Cookbook*. It's probably still around. There's two volumes. It's real thick and it was, at that time, the ultimate in a cookbook. I got both volumes, and I still have them. Written in the margins are the times that I cooked those various recipes, and which party we had them at.

*Almost like a diary of where you'd been cooking.*

Right. Yes. We connected with a number of other people, either from the Army base or the apartment. We were in a big apartment complex. There were a number of people there.

*So were you starting to get a group here together, of friends and so on? And were you attending the church also?*

We did not attend church at all while we were in Washington, D.C. The Unitarian Church, the big one, was downtown. There was one in Bethesda. That just wasn't as important to us. It became a logistical problem, and Sam

was on duty a lot on weekends, and so for some reason that was not a part of our life when we were there.

*Was his schedule mostly days, or did it rotate a lot?*

Oh, yes. It rotated. I mean, he went on to different aspects of dermatology, and he had a lot of weekend night duty.

We started investing some money in the Merrill Lynch monthly investment plan. I remember that. My husband loved following the stock market and reading the Wall Street Journal, and we bought several things. Well, in this monthly investment plan, we made *money* that first winter, enough that we decided to take a trip on our profits, and we went to Jamaica. Sam's mother came back to Washington and took care of Janet for five days. We flew to Miami, and then flew to Jamaica and stayed at two different hotels and just did the Jamaica thing. That was very exciting, because that was the first time I was away from the baby. Of course, it took me forever to get ready to go and leave all the instructions, and. . . . Oh, my God, it was terrible! And his mother was very precise and very much wanting to do it all just exactly right, so the two of us probably drove Janet nuts. But anyway, they survived, and so did we.

We had a great trip, although I really did not like the feeling of being in a country where the haves and the have nots were so clearly divided. I didn't like being a tourist where people were begging me for money. I didn't like negotiating to buy anything. That part of it I didn't like at all. I loved the beauty and the culture in other ways and being away with Sam for five days and all that, that was fun. But you know, I've never enjoyed going down to Mexico and those other cultures. I'm not comfortable with the poverty.

*Janet was about how old when you took this trip?*

Geez. I think only about five or six months old. It was the following spring after she was born. My parents would come up to visit, and we made some good friends. There was a playground right outside.

In the meantime, Sam's brother Oscar finished college, then went into the Army. He went to Pomona College and then to the Army Monterey Language School, and then he was in Germany as an interpreter. He ended up getting a job at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., so we saw him quite a bit. He's about three years younger than Sam.

Oscar was dating a girl he'd met back in California, and they decided to get married. He went back in February of 1958 to marry her and bring her back to Washington. They bought an old three-story flat down near the Library of Congress, down in the old part of Washington. Our second baby was due right about then, and I was very uncomfortable along with lugging Janet around now, who was *huge*. So, just on kind of a whim, we sent Janet back to California with Oscar. The day before he left, we said, "What if Oscar took Janet with him, and she got to visit grandmother for a few days," so I could rest while we waited for this other baby.

Oscar was very open to that. Grandmother knew Janet was coming, but Oscar didn't tell his fiancée. He got off the plane with this fifteen-month-old child, with her blankee clutched to her and said, "Frieda, there's something I need to tell you." She was a little shocked. Oh, we've laughed about that a lot, but she stayed. I mean, she didn't run away. [laughter] So Janet went to grandmother and the wedding plans proceeded. My really close Aunt Lucille, who was then teaching in California, took her for the wedding time,

then the three of them flew back together and we took her off their hands, so they could go on their honeymoon. [laughter]

Carla still had not arrived, but it had given me a little respite. Then Carla arrived on February 24, 1958, and hers was a much less traumatic birth, in my memory. Although it was still the same old-style stuff, back into the hospital at Walter Reed. We did not know either of their sexes before they were born. I don't know if you could do that then.

*There was a whole element of surprise that no longer exists with childbirth.*

Right. Yes. And so then we had two. [laughter] It was tough, but it was exciting and I was much more comfortable. It was much easier with Carla, because I knew a lot more about what I was doing, and she was a much calmer baby than Janet had been.

We have pictures of Carla in a bassinet, and Jan looking over the edge. At one point, I think Janet tried to hit her on the head with a bottle or something. Anyway, there was a little bit of jealousy there that we had to deal with.

We were in that apartment then for another year and a half. We were in the same apartment for three years.

*You said it was tough at first with two to take care of?*

Yes. Just the logistics. [laughter] But Sam was *wonderful*. He was always very, very helpful. In fact, I am now this instant recalling . . . We were on the second floor of the apartment house, and the washers and dryers were in the basement. He did the laundry. I don't think I ever did the laundry then while we lived in that place—maybe once or twice. That was his job. He didn't mind doing that at all. Oh, it was fabulous!



You didn't have disposable diapers. I think we must have had them for travel or something, but you had diaper services that came and brought cloth diapers every day or every other day, whatever kind of routine you wanted.

Now somewhere along in there, I learned about an opportunity to do some part-time work as an interviewer for the Institute for Motivational Research. A man named Ernest Dichter, I think it was, had started this. It was a whole business of his, a psychological thing, where I think some of the end product came out as information for marketing, for business and that kind of thing. I started doing that on a free-lance basis. I don't know how it started, but they would send me a job in the mail, and they would say, "This is the assignment. This is the deadline. This is the pay." I mean, it was pretty much a piece rate. "Can you accept this job?" Then I'd either say yes or no, so it was something I could fit into my life.

*And it was phone interviewing that you can do at home?*

It could be phone, although it was mainly one-on-one. It was mainly talking with people, and then doing a typewritten response to a certain set of questions. But they gave me very precise characteristics. You had to have two white males and one black, and one had to be over thirty, and the other had to have a high school education only. Now, if your next door neighbors met the characteristics, you could do them, or if your husband even did or your best friend did. I had to talk with my friends and say, "Who knows somebody? I need five women who went to college after 1940." They were wild, some of them.

I got started on this, and I enjoyed it, and it gave me some little pin money that

was *mine*. I ended up doing this for three different companies for about five years. I was still doing it when we went to Las Vegas, and then I dropped it after I got so involved there. It was something I could do anywhere in the world depending upon what the criteria was.

*And how did you manage that with two small children?*

Well, I did it, obviously. I had friends that helped babysit. We traded off babysitting. Sam's schedule was such that I could do it when he was home, and he didn't mind. I worked it in, part-time. I really started needing something else to do besides gourmet cooking, sewing, bridge and the kids.

*That's what I was going to ask. Was it a financial necessity?*

No, it was not financial. We didn't have a lot of money, but we had enough. I needed some intellectual stimulation of some kind, and it was very interesting. We must have had a typewriter, because I think I had to type the reports up and send them in and get paid. I continued that down through San Antonio, and I had some very interesting ones there, where they asked me to get like fifteen people together in a group like a focus group. They all had to talk with each other about, oh, some crazy product like a certain deodorant. It was *very* interesting. You never knew what product you were going to be dealing with or what piece of life was going to be the object of this research.

We had a lot of friends. We did some fun parties—like, in this apartment complex we had a Halloween party where we really got into costuming. With the couple next door, we created a dragon out of papier maché and a frame, and all four of us got underneath to

create the dragon and worked out a soft shoe dance.

We had to walk in the same pattern or the dragon would all come apart. It had a big head with coat hangers and papier maché and bright colors. I think that we even did some charade playing still and that kind of thing with people. It was just young married couples having a good time.

Another element that comes into this at this point is that I am now an Army wife. I am an officer's wife. I am a wife of a medical doctor, an *Army* doctor, and that threw me into the Officers' Wives' Club, which I was expected to belong to.

*And what was that like for you?*

*Awful.* When I say awful, it evolved to being awful, because I didn't like the superficiality of it. I didn't like the strata. I didn't like being upper middle class and not thinking about anybody else. It was a very *social* thing, and you had to defer to the colonel's wife. You had a hierarchy! Just like the military. You had to do what was right. You had to do the proper things at the proper times, and it was very boring to me. I did not like it, and I didn't do a lot in Walter Reed, because the babies were little, and we were quite a bit away from the hospital, but I did do some of that.

Together, we were expected to be at monthly socials at the club. There were hail and farewells, you know, people coming and going, new staff. We did that a *lot*. We were part of the medical corps social set. The couples part was OK, because we found couples that were compatible with us, and we could do what we wanted, kind of, but the "wives only" thing just went against me the wrong way. But I dressed up. We bought

hats. You really needed to have a new hat at the first luncheon in the fall, and I made my clothes. That was OK because a lot of other women were doing that, too, but I was not comfortable with the programming, just the superficiality of it all.

When we got back to San Antonio, my husband by that time was no longer an intern, so I was moving up in the *ranks* of the officers' wives here. [laughter] I had a little bit more say on what was going to go on, so I decided that we would reform this Officers' Wives Club in San Antonio. Now, I don't recall the day that I just went at that deliberately, but I just couldn't put up with that style anymore, and I offered some suggestions about a service project we could do. [laughter] We ended up doing some of those things. One of them was a style show in which all the models were the women in the club—the wives and their children—and everything they modeled, they made; which of course, I fit right into the picture. I have a picture, and I'm sure that I organized that style show from beginning to end, and they probably did it to humor me. [laughter] Evidently I had made enough noise about it that some people felt it was a good idea, so the club went along with it.

I also recall getting into some kind of thing with the colonel's wife, which was really almost a confrontation. I don't remember over what, but I remember some very uncomfortable times, where I think I just did not go to the officers' wives' luncheons at all. Nothing drastic happened. [laughter] At the same time, Sam was learning what it's like to be in the medical corps at his own rank, the protocol that goes with rank. And then in the medical community, he had another whole set of things related to medical specialties.

Through this, we were, of course, needing to think about: did we want to stay in for



twenty years for him to make a career of this, which is a very *nice* career in many ways—security, opportunity to move up, opportunity to grow in your profession? It's a good life. Or did we want to get out when we could, which would be at the end of his payback time? So he was struggling with how to fit in with the guys as well. Toward the end of that payback time, it became pretty clear to both of us that we wanted to get out.

We wanted to get out. [laughter] It was a joint decision. He could see having to “play the game,” so to speak, the political game—that all wasn't based on merit and logic in the medical corps either. And there were other things hanging over our heads, like at that point in time there was a good chance he might get sent to Laos where there was a confrontation going on.

*So this is the early sixties by now? Starting the Viet Nam era?*

Yes. 1960, 1961.

*And you were aware of that confrontation going on over in Laos? When he made the decision, do you remember that being part of the decision?*

Well, yes. We were pretty aware of what was going on. He always read the paper.

OK, we're now in San Antonio, and we had three years there. We bought a house. That was *so* exciting. We had been in this little apartment down at the base when we were there before. We looked all over, and we bought this house, and it was absolutely a wonderful buy, a wonderful home. It was brand new. It had not been lived in. It was on the edge of a very upscale community for San Antonio at that point in time. It was right off of the beltway. (That's not what they called it there—Loop 410, or something like that.) We

were on Chisholm Trail. Right across from the house in front of us was McArthur Park, *beautiful* trees and a playground. Just kind of a family park. No athletic fields or anything. Just like a neighborhood park.

The development went on for several blocks behind us. We paid \$19,000 for this house. It was brick. It had parquet floors. It had three bedrooms, the family room, a kitchen, a double car garage, a patio in the back and thirty-eight oak trees on the lot.

The houses in the development went up to like sixty and seventy-five thousand, which were *mansions* at that point in time. We *loved* this house, but it still wasn't that dream house we were going to have someday. We would drive around San Antonio and look at these beautiful residential areas there. We really liked real modern things, glass and a lot of big windows. We identified several houses that we'd go by regularly just to look at, and they were in the thirty thousand dollar range. You just think back at relative cost.

*For example, what would've been the pay scale for your husband at that point?*

Hmmmm, I don't remember. I don't know. Not much, but we could afford the house, and so we moved in. We put our Tiki in the little planter right by the front door. We still had the Hawaiian flavor, but we added really nice furniture there for the living room. I was a full-time homemaker.

*And this was before you decided not to re-enlist, is that right? You bought the house while he was still in the service?*

Right. Oh, we bought the house to live in those three years. When we came back to San Antonio, we had to have a place to live. We

now had two kids. It was really, really nice. We had very nice neighbors, and I remember some really good times there.

The other thing that we did was join the Unitarian Church. At that point, it was in a house down toward the center of town. And we, of course, now had two children who needed religious upbringing. That became my real activity. I got very involved in the church, as did my husband. He was Sunday school Director for a short time. I was Membership Chair. During the time we were in the house, the congregation was getting ready to build. It must have been moving along, because we moved into a beautiful new church, quite large, out in the suburbs. We continued to be very involved in that church.

Flower arranging was something that I got into, because the church had a total brick wall with little ledges built out to hold flower arrangements, and it was *huge*. You had to have almost the limb of a tree to show up. This was a real challenge, to bring huge floral sprays and candles and make interesting arrangements. I was part of the committee that did that. We did something different every week.

Then I *organized* a whole people-to-people, get acquainted thing through the membership committee, and we surveyed everybody to see who liked jazz, and who played bridge, and who liked gardening, and then we paired all those people up into little parties to get to know each other. I organized all of that with a committee. I spent *lots* of time on the telephone doing that. I was back to organizing again.

*And how old was Janet by now? Was she in school?*

No. She was two, three, four. She went to kindergarten the last year we were in San Antonio.

*So you still had the two babies at home, really?*

Right. Right. They had a really nice backyard to play in with all these trees and play equipment. We did lots of trading off on babysitting and playing bridge, just all that typical stuff that some women did in those days.

I continued the part-time interviewing. I did more of that. Grandparents came to us, and we went to them, both in Missouri and California. So again it was a good time.

Some of the stuff that we had, of course, were the childhood illnesses that the kids had, that were pretty frightening. We had some really *bad* measles. We again had the girls in the shower to cut the fever. [laughter] But other than that, they were really pretty healthy.

*Did you have some traditions that you were building within the family? Some holiday traditions and that type of thing?*

Oh, yes. A lot of Christmas kinds of stuff that we did. A tree. Lots of decorating. I mean, I was *really* into *Better Homes and Gardens*. I made decorations out of the egg cartons, and all that stuff they showed you in the magazine. Christmas was *really* big. I decorated the house with overkill, probably, when we first arrived in Las Vegas as well. So house decorating was really big. We had a tree in the family room in San Antonio, and it was big enough that you could do that, and kids playing with their toys, and Christmas Eve was always family supper time. I think we let the kids open a family gift then, but we really waited for Santa Claus and all of that on Christmas morning. I think several Christmases we were at grandparents, either in California or Missouri, so we would travel back and forth.

*Were birthdays a special holiday at your house?*

Yes. They were. I had birthday parties for the girls. Yes. Yes. I don't remember anything real special about those. We had them at home. We weren't yet into going to Chuck E. Cheese, or whatever it is kids do these days.

*Yes, it was more like birthday cake and little friends come over?*

Yes. Yes, little friends with games and presents. Hmmm. Other traditions? Yes, Easter was dressing up in new clothes and going to church. We took short car trips around Texas. No big trips I can think of.

*What about daily traditions for things like reading to the girls or things like that?*

Oh, yes! Reading was very big, *very, very* big, always. Even after they could read, I still read. We had rocking chairs, and reading to both of them at night before they went to bed was a big tradition. Right. We did that. Going to the library and getting library books. We had a lot of books at the house, too.

A really funny event was when Sam decided I should join in investing our money in the stock market, when we had a little bit to invest. We had no real desire to get rich, and money was not important. I mean, enough money to live the lifestyle we were living, which was very nice, but not to get rich, to travel all over the world, to have a big boat. He didn't play golf. To do all those kinds of things did not matter to us, so we could live on a pretty reasonable amount of money. Then we had some money to invest, because we didn't know what was going to happen next. So he got very much into the stock market.

At one point he gave me a thousand dollars to invest, and that was *awful*. I loved

reading the Wall Street Journal, like those three lead articles that were there everyday—they probably do it the same way today—that were *always* worth reading and of value to your mental stimulation, et cetera, and knowledge of world affairs. But then getting into these companies and the intricacies of the market and all of that . . . Oh, geez! I tried, and I invested the money, and I lost it all over about a year. It went from a thousand down to almost nothing. [laughter] He finally accepted the fact that I wasn't going to be a big partner in the investment side of our family, but I remember trying.



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## MAKING NEVADA HOME

Toward the end of that time, we started talking about where we wanted to go and where we wanted to settle down.

Sam's life was very good. He was an excellent physician. Brilliant mind. I know he did well in what he did and was highly accepted on the staff of the hospital. He started as a first lieutenant, then was a captain during his residency and was now a major. He was on various committees at the hospital and did "his thing" there very successfully, but also ran into his unwillingness to conform in certain ways, just like I was not wanting to be real active in the women's club if they weren't going to do something meaningful.

We began to talk about what we would do if we didn't stay in the Army. We got real serious about that and decided we wanted to live in the West, and we wanted to identify a community in which we could settle down. And so, we organized to do that. We wrote letters to about fifty communities in California, Oregon, Arizona, maybe New Mexico, maybe Washington. We asked for their Chamber of Commerce packets. We

kind of had these ideas about what we'd like to do and where we'd like to live. We started getting all this stuff [laughter], and we pored over it and thought about what it'd be like to live here and there.

We developed this list of places we thought we'd like to visit, and in the summer of 1961 we did that. We drove to L.A., left the kids with Sam's folks and spent, I don't know, two weeks maybe driving up the coast and going to all these various towns. We had a list of ones we really wanted to see.

What came out of all that is that all the places that we thought we'd like to live, they did not need dermatologists—places like Monterey, Santa Barbara, Newport Beach. I was not a water person; I never was, but Sam was always a water person and had grown up down there and loved sailing and the beach and everything. We really liked San Jose. On paper in 1961 it looked really good, but before we got up there, we wandered around down in southern California.

One of the places everybody said needed dermatologists was Carson City—

we had the American Medical Association placement service feeding us information on communities that needed doctors.

*And did you even consider it?*

No. The population was like 13,000 or something like that. We did not want that small a town; that did not appeal to us. We didn't even consider it. Anaheim was one of the places that needed a dermatologist. We didn't like L.A. at all, didn't like the smog. We didn't like the crowdedness or anything, so we decided against Anaheim. Then we went up north, and when we got to San Jose, we just said, "Oh! This is just going to be like L.A. in two years." San Jose, Sunnyvale, Palo Alto—that whole area was just another big conglomerate happening.

And so, we didn't find our dream town in that whole trip. We didn't find it at all. We went through Phoenix going out, and it was attractive to us in some ways, but we didn't see any real opportunity for him. We had two places where we were going to stop on the way back to San Antonio. One was Santa Fe, where a doctor had actually communicated with him who had been retired from Chicago, came to Santa Fe and needed a partner. We had an appointment on a certain date to meet with this guy. And the other place was Las Vegas, because he had a friend there he'd known in the Army, Dr. Hal Boyer.

Everywhere we went, Sam called on the dermatologists. He'd either known them in the Army, or by now he'd been in the American Dermatology Association and always went to their meetings in Chicago in December. (Oh! That's when I would decorate for Christmas. Every year that meeting was in Chicago the second week in December, and he would be gone for like five days. That's when I would just launch into all these decorations, so it was

all done when he got back.) We would call on all these guys, and they would share with him the tenor of that community.

So we picked up the kids, and we headed back, and we went to Las Vegas just kind of on a fluke. We had to go through there to get back, and he knew Dr. Boyer, so we stopped. We were in a motel down on Fremont Street, and he called on Dr. Boyer, and Dr. Boyer said, "You've got to come. We're just *swamped*. We can't handle everything. Come and join me. Be my partner."

He came back to the motel and told me this, and I said, "You've got to be kidding. Raise our kids in Las Vegas?" This was a little, kind of run-down motel on Fremont Street, and the air conditioning I'm sure was on.

*You said "raise your kids in Las Vegas?" Because why? Because of the image or because of what you were seeing?*

Because of the image I had of Las Vegas. Sin City. Just that kind of nothing, except it wasn't a normal town. We went through there just out of curiosity and to see this guy, and it was on the route to get home. It had not been seriously considered. I don't think we'd sent a letter there.

So anyway, Dr. Boyer was serious. [laughter] He gave Sam a map to drive me around town the next day and show me trees—residential areas that had trees and churches and schools—so that I could see there was a real town there with real people. And so we did. We drove around. We went on the Strip at night. We went out to dinner, had a baby sitter, and saw *that* part of it. I don't know what we saw, but in 1961 there wasn't much. The Strip was just beginning, and there were no homes down in the valley to speak of. Sahara Avenue was San Francisco Avenue, and Tropicana Avenue was Bond Avenue.



But economically, you *had* to think about it. We were scared about whether anybody would ever come to his office and want his services. We'd had the security of an Army paycheck, and he was very nervous about going out into private practice, so the idea of going with a group that was going to help you the first year was appealing. So we stayed three days and took another look, and I still was pretty apprehensive about the whole thing. He said, "Well, I'll consider it."

The other places we considered that year included staying in San Antonio, which would have been very comfortable. Lots of medical people stayed in San Antonio, and so you could move into somebody's group down there fairly easily. Dallas was another area that we considered, briefly. Of course, I had gone to school there. I did not have real ties there, but it was an attractive place to live then.

But we went to Santa Fe with *really* high hopes. I mean, Santa Fe just was looking better and better and better in our dreams, in our mind. And this was really funny, because we got to Santa Fe, and in one day we wrote Santa Fe off so clearly.

The doctor that was there wined and dined us and had the medical community come to a cocktail party in his home. One of the things that we did in each community was look at the town and how we felt it would be to raise the kids there. One of the places we looked at was the library, and the library in Santa Fe was awful. I mean it was nothing. It just was real small and totally inadequate as a library. At this cocktail party with the medical community of Santa Fe there to greet us and everything, Sam said something about the library, and the guy he was talking to said, "Well, you know, we all have our own."

We just felt like if we went there, we were going to have to be part of the "haves" and not care about the "have nots", and we couldn't

do that. It hit us! And we also did not like the architecture. We did not like the idea that if we built our dream home, it had to be Santa Fe style—had to be adobe. We drove out into these beautiful hills and saw this gorgeous scenery and everything, but the only variation you could have would be territorial style, where you could have a row of bricks around the top. That was absolutely the *only* variation in the architecture. It was *all* adobe. And our dream was *Sunset Magazine's* redwood and glass. That, combined with the elitism of this group we met, we could not even consider going there. It was so funny, and we both felt that way. It was really funny. I mean, it's a gorgeous spot! People would kill to live in Santa Fe, you know.

*And you were being wined and dined by Santa Fe?*

Oh! We were being given it on a silver platter, and we couldn't do it in the manner in which we saw it at that point.

Here we went back with two choices, Santa Fe or Las Vegas. [laughter] But somehow Las Vegas . . . I mean, right now, I can't tell you how I would compare those two, except that I really liked the feel of the mountains and everything. I had not lived there or anything, but the architecture was more modern. It was a more modern city, I guess that's what I would say. That part appealed to me.

I found the Strip exciting. I thought, "Well, this is unique." You know, we loved music and we'd always loved jazz. We started collecting records about that time, too. In our early marriage we had a long-play record player and had *lots* of records of jazz and played them at home. So there was enough about Las Vegas that I was willing to consider going there, and particularly when the economics looked good. We went back. We talked about it. Sam

called Dr. Boyer and said he would come, and he had to make an appointment to pass the state board—that was the following March, March of 1962.

Between that August and March, I've forgotten what happened, but he and Dr. Boyer agreed that the partnership was not going to happen. There was another doctor in town named Dr. Carl Kaufman, who was an older Jewish man in his fifties. He was only practicing like two days a week, and his office was sitting empty the rest of the time. He had an assistant, and Sam had also met him and his wife, Ida, and they really took to each other. Dr. Kaufman said, "You come, and you use my office. I'll rent it to you, and then I'll still practice all day Mondays and Thursday afternoons, but the rest of the time the office is yours." I'm sure the rent was reasonable.

Dr. Boyer was more of a high energy, driven, succeed-in-medicine type of person than Dr. Kaufman. I think Sam was going to fit much better with a more laid-back doctor, one not driven to be highly successful monetarily and all that, and felt a much more comfortable relationship with this Dr. Kaufman. So that's what we ended up doing.

We flew back out together in March of 1962 for him to take the boards, and we were there like two days. It was so cold. The wind blew. Oh! It was awful! There was a sand storm. The weather was terrible. [laughter] But we did our thing while we were there, and he did pass the boards, and so we did decide to move. And then we started making plans.

*And how big was Las Vegas when you moved there? Do you know about what the population would have been then?*

Well, yes. We moved there in August of 1962. The 1960 census was 127,000 for the whole county. That was Las Vegas,

Henderson, North Las Vegas, Boulder City, the unincorporated area, the Strip, Overton—all of that—and by 1962, it could have even been 200,000, because it was starting on its upward rise. That's why they needed dermatologists. People were coming up there from Laughlin, from Bullhead City, from Kingman, from Baker, California, and from Death Valley. It was becoming a hub. There were two dermatologists there, so you could hardly miss.

*How did you feel about it, even after this amount of time thinking about it and planning? Were you thinking it was the right decision?*

Well, once we decided to go, then we went, you know. I was still apprehensive. I was still apprehensive about the lifestyle, so to speak, but then we started getting serious about making the move.

We moved in August. We went up to Missouri, saw my parents up there. We were driving two cars by this time. We had a station wagon as well as the Volkswagen. We had a cat. We had never had dogs to my memory. We did start having pets in San Antonio. That cat left us in Amarillo. [laughter] I had it sitting on a bag of ice on the front floor of the Volkswagen and that cat gave up. I mean, it ran away.

*Too hot?*

Right. [laughter] It was hot. We had the two cars. We would trade off driving. I think we had both kids in the station wagon, and the other person drove the VW, and the luggage and other stuff was loaded in the back. After Amarillo, then we headed across the desert to Indio, and we got into a sandstorm that pitted the windows: you couldn't even see all the way across. And the kids, from the time

we hit California they thought grandmother's house was in the next five miles, you know, because we were now in California. And so for . . . *God*, hours and hours and hours, they said, "When are we going to get there?"

We finally got to L.A. and left the kids again with the grandparents (Sam's parents) and went to Las Vegas to find a house. This was in August. I can't remember if we took both cars up then or not. Probably not. We went up, and we stayed in a motel.

You couldn't find any housing. There were tracts being built, and you bought a picture, and yours would be done in nine months. Rentals were almost impossible. We went to the newspaper, to the *Las Vegas Sun*, to see what ads were coming in that hadn't yet been printed for rentals, because there just weren't any. I mean, it was just at the height of a boom.

We finally got a rental on the corner of San Francisco and Pardee Avenue. They were some duplexes that were rentals. They were made out of concrete block, and the sand blew in under the door, and they had vinyl floors. Oh, they were *awful*. The cockroaches came out at night. You wouldn't dare walk around the house at night to go into the kitchen. I mean, it was just *awful*. And we moved into this rental. We bought a house that had to be built first, but at the same time we had to find a place to live.

We went to this one tract that we felt that we maybe could afford, and we actually put the money down on this house that was really just a little, very modest house. It was *exciting*, even then, but you didn't get anywhere the value with your money like you would in San Antonio—our little beautiful brick house with thirty-eight oak trees. Boy, that was long gone.

Well, that first house we didn't end up buying. We put the money down on it. It was like \$17,000 maybe. There wasn't anything like

a brick house in Las Vegas, maybe stucco (I can't remember) or concrete block.

We also drove around, and we came on this community that the design of the houses was really the kind of thing we liked, and that was Paradise Palms on what was then the Stardust Golf Course. This was "the living end"—to have a home on the golf course! It had clerestory windows and modern design and lots of glass. Some of the models were split level, and they had nice landscaping. That's all that was up—the models—and about one block of homes, but they were really quite a cut up from this other one.

This we liked much better than the other one. The salesman could tell that pretty quickly. He did his job and found out that my husband was a doctor moving into town. I've forgotten how the conversation went, but he just kind of reassured us that we weren't going to have any trouble meeting the payments, [laughter] that this town could use another doctor, and that we could afford this house.

Well, this house was \$33,000. This is even more than that dream house we looked at in San Antonio, and a lot less house. Still, in Las Vegas in 1962, it wasn't top of the line on the D.I. [Desert Inn] golf course, but it was definitely an upper class neighborhood. With both of them, you could pick your carpet and wallpaper and colors. We lived in mainly just brand new houses all our life, so we liked that idea a lot. We'd done that in San Antonio and in the apartments in Langley Park.

I think we got our money back from the other people, but this house was going to take nine months to build. I mean, we bought a design on a lot, so we still had to rent this other place while the house got built.

One of the things I did in the rental that we lived in during the first year we were in Las Vegas (Janet was in the first grade, and Carla was kind of at home with me) is that

I made the drapes for the living room. We had this expanse of glass that was like maybe thirty feet. I got this really beautiful fabric, and I had made drapes before, I guess back in Washington and San Antonio. It was so heavy, I had to make it in pieces, because I really couldn't do one whole expanse. One-half was too long. My husband had to hold it up. I mean, we got it together, and I did the pleats and everything, but it was really a family operation. Everybody had to help hold the fabric up so that it would move through the machine. That was a major project that year, getting these drapes done for the new house.

In the rental I had a room for sewing, and the girls shared a bedroom, and then we had our own bedroom, so there were three small bedrooms and a living room. I think some of our stuff stayed in storage because we couldn't get everything we had in there.

The girls started to school. Janet went to first grade at Crestwood School, which is the neighborhood we were in, and Carla was not in school. Jan did very well in first grade. She loved it and that was fine. Carla and I spent a lot of time together, and she was always just wonderful to have with me. We just did a lot of good things together—a lot of reading and crafts and things. She'd go with me when I got my hair done. That was one thing that I'd always, always done since Honolulu, I guess. I could never fix my own hair like I was satisfied with it, at all. I just didn't have the patience to learn, so I have always gotten my hair done at a beauty parlor once a week. Carla would go with me, and she would sit and read her books while I would be under the dryer. We both remember that.

The builders of our new house about died, because we were there *every* night. Finally one of them said, "You know, you'd just be a lot happier if you'd go home and let us tell you

when it's done." [laughter] It was our baby, you know.

That day did arrive when we moved in, and that was *very*, very exciting. That was in 1963, I think it was in June. It was a wonderful house. We had about a third of an acre. We were on the Stardust Golf Course. We were one of the first families to move in on that block—not the first, but it was still a very new development, although the golf course was up and functioning. There was very little landscaping. No one had landscaping; we didn't have any for two or three years.

We added on a large family room two years later. The home was about 1,700 square feet, I think, so both girls each had a bedroom, and we had a nice large bedroom and a beautiful living room/dining room which was kind of open with the high clerestory windows, and oh, wall-to-wall glass looking out on the golf course, and kitchen and a yard that was about a third of an acre.

The interior decorating was really big, because now I had a new house to furnish. The girls each had their own bedrooms and that was fun. Gourmet cooking continued, and we did quite a bit of entertaining. We really liked to have people over for dinner, sometimes with their kids but more often not, and then we'd play bridge. We connected with a variety of people in town, so we really enjoyed the entertaining, and we did quite a bit in that house.

*Did you still have your sewing room?*

I didn't have a sewing room. I'm trying to think about how we dealt with that. That's probably one of the reasons we added the family room. We added this room fairly quickly, a huge room, like fifteen by twenty-five, which gave us a really big house. I did

continue to sew some there, but I guess I was moving out of that phase by then.

We moved into that house in 1963. We lived there twenty-two years. The girls shifted to Robert E. Lake School. Jan was in second grade, and Carla was in kindergarten, though they moved her up to first grade at the end of the fall semester. They were building Ruby Thomas School, which was in our district, and Orr Junior High. The next year the girls went into Ruby Thomas, their home school, which was closer but still required driving all the way around the golf course, so I was in the car-pooling business with others in the neighborhood. It was a very cutting edge, team-teaching school with big open pods and all kinds of interesting things going on. Carla did really well in that atmosphere, and Jan did not. She really needed more of the close attention of one single classroom teacher. She was still a good student, but I remember that she didn't do as well in that particular setting. We had conferences at school trying to help get them both squared away for school, but they were both always really good students. The teachers knew that Jan needed some more structure, so they gave it within that framework. They liked school. We did the whole homework bit and lots of reading, extra reading, and lots of going to the library and all of that. So that was pretty typical of grade school kinds of things.

Orr Junior High and Valley High, those schools got built just as our kids were coming up to each of them. But the year at Robert E. Lake was the year that both of them now were in school at the same time for a couple of hours a day, and I could think about doing something different for the first time. I also was a teacher's aide at the school. I was paid part-time to be a teacher's aide for so many hours a week. I played the piano for the music

teacher for her music classes, and I supervised the lunchroom at noon time. Those were my two jobs. I always say I taught lunch, because one day a little boy saw me in the market and said, "Oh, Mommy, she teaches me lunch." I was the disciplinarian in the lunchroom.

I was there working in the lunchroom when [President John F.] Kennedy was shot. Everybody knows where they were when that happened, and that's where I was. I don't remember a lot about it other than the word coming and everybody being just so, you know, devastated that something like that could happen in *America*. I think maybe they let school out early that day, and then, of course, we went home to the radio. There was also television by then.

*Did you mostly listen to radio?*

I remember television becoming a part of my life while I was in college. Coming home to visit my parents, there was a television set that, if you sat and looked really hard, you could get a picture part of the time. That was in the fifties, early, about 1950. But this was now 1963. November.

From the very beginning, we knew Carla was smart. Both the girls were smart and picked up on all the usual things quite early, but Carla was more concentrated in that area than Jan. By the time she was ready for kindergarten, we had a friend who was the school psychologist for the school district, and he agreed to test Carla. He really felt that she was ready to go into first grade, but the school district's policy really wasn't particularly open to that. What we did that year was, she started in kindergarten with the idea that if she performed as we anticipated she might, she could move into first grade in January, and that is what she did. She had a half a year of kindergarten, and then she



went right into first grade, and then Jan was in second grade. So then they proceeded to be like that the rest of the time. There was a time in junior high, or maybe it was later in grade school, when they talked about moving Carla up an additional grade, and we just said, “No.” We’re so glad we did, but she tested out at a very high I.Q., and so she was always a really good student.

While I was working there, I got to know the principal really well. Her name was Edna Hinman. She was just the most *fabulous* person and went on to move up in the school district and then retire and move to Salt Lake, but we kept in touch with her for a long time—first as a parent/principal relationship, but then beyond that.

The same early years included our finding the Unitarian fellowship in Las Vegas, where we felt we would find our friends and our social acquaintances and everything. It was a small group. It had its own building, because one of the members had given a house that was down off of Tropicana, back in the desert. They had mainly a Friday night discussion group and some semblance of a service on Sunday, but many more came to the Friday night discussion group than they did on Sunday. There was really no Sunday school. Well, we had expected to find our home there, but we were very disappointed because Friday night was more like a fight night; it was more like a therapy session for the people. It didn’t have much of the vestiges of Unitarianism at all. It was just kind of a liberal fight group. [laughter]

*Verbal battles?*

Yes, right. They had fun doing this on Friday nights. We jumped in, and we tried to help create a Sunday school. My husband ran the Sunday school, and I helped organize

worship services, and we both went on the board of the fellowship and tried to make something happen with that group for about two years, and then basically gave up. There just wasn’t a critical mass of people that were willing to create a Unitarian family.

But we did connect with some interesting people, and we had a Social Action Committee which was important to us. At one of the meetings of that Social Action Committee, we talked about the fact that we had no public library for 80,000 people who lived in the part of Clark County outside the City of Las Vegas or the City of Henderson. Out of that Social Action Committee saying, “Why don’t we find out what it would take for this area to have a library,” came my first project.

*There was a library for Las Vegas, but not one for the surrounding areas in the county?*

Right. Right. The city stopped at San Francisco Avenue, which got changed to Sahara Avenue right about the time we moved there. Of course, that’s where the Strip began, with the Sahara Hotel and on down. And we lived in the county. Paradise Palms was now one of the new developments, and then development, development, development. So there were 80,000 people living east of the Strip and down in Paradise and Winchester and all those unincorporated areas. Library service was not automatic for those of us living in these unincorporated parts of the county. The beginnings of all that was the Unitarian Social Action Committee saying, “What could we do to get a library?” The people on that committee included Ty Hilbrecht, who was a young attorney in town, who then went on to be in the Assembly and the Senate, and later I followed in his footsteps. When he retired from the Senate is when I ran for the Senate.



(I, by that time, had shown liberal leanings.) But anyway, he was a Unitarian.

Another person who was in that group was a man named Armin Behr. He was Jewish and a scientist with the Atomic Energy Commission, which was the forerunner at the test site to DOE [Department of Energy]. He was a very active member of the Sierra Club—a hiker and a mountain climber and everything. Through him we connected with the Sierra Club, and through Ty we connected with some other aspects of the community.

There were some neat people in the fellowship that we remained friends with, but for the most part, it was not a viable group, so we ended up going hiking on Sunday then for years. We lived our Unitarianism by belonging to something called the Church of the Larger Fellowship, which you could do by joining Unitarians and belonging by mail—getting sermons in the mail and getting the national magazine and getting the kinds of things that we felt we liked and the connection with the denomination as a whole. We just basically gave up on that group at that point in time.

*That must have been a disappointment, because you looked forward to having a community.*

It was. Yes. Yes. That had been our family in San Antonio, a large part of it. So we basically moved into working with the school, doing the things parents did with their kids, being the teacher's aide and then joining the P.T.A., and just the usual—going to the book fair and helping run the meetings.

*OK. So you got very active in school?*

Not real active, because the library project became bigger than life real quick. [laughter]

The other element that we discovered right when we came, and then became an

important part of our life forever, was Red Rock Canyon west of town. We met some people who lived out in Calico Basin, and we discovered the beauty and getting out in the desert. We went up to Mt. Charleston, and just the whole world of the out-of-doors opened up. That's what made me love Las Vegas. It became a *wonderful* place to live, because you could get out with your family, and you could enjoy everything from mountains to desert, and yet you had all of them along with as much urban living as you wanted, all within blocks of your house. So it truly is and was a very unique place and was a great place to raise a family if you had your own life in order to where you didn't let other parts of Las Vegas consume you.

We literally lived our religion. That's very much a part of Unitarianism—what you do on this earth is much more important than what's going to happen to you later. Creating community and respecting others and doing what's right in terms of people and values just became very big in our lives. That's what got me into the organizations that could let me carry out projects and got my husband active as well. We both got involved in groups in the community that were carrying out the kinds of things that we cared about.

We started family camping. The first long trip that I recall was in 1964, and that was to Mt. Wheeler in White Pine County with the Sierra Club, the southern group of the Toiyabe Chapter. I don't quite remember how they were organized at that point, but there was no formal Sierra Club group when we came to town. Some of the people that we had met (that were in the same Unitarian fellowship and that also had been in the little Social Action Committee trying to create a library) were also hikers and Sierra Club members from other lives, three of them in particular:

a man named Howard Booth, who is still in Las Vegas; Armin Behr, who was with the A.E.C. [Atomic Energy Commission] at the test site; and a guy named Verlis Fischer, who was a retired forester. They each came to Las Vegas during those years and found each other, started hiking informally, and decided it was time to create a group of the Sierra Club in southern Nevada. We had gotten to know them, one way or another. Because we had a large living room, they decided to hold the meeting in our house. A number of people came, and the Sierra Club was formed and flourished from the day it was started.

*Were these people that you met primarily through your attempts to work with the Unitarian Church?*

Well, certainly Armin was a member of that group, and then he connected us right away with Howard and Verlis. We started going on some of the outings with them, just day hikes out to Red Rock and other places around the Mt. Charleston area. That grew very quickly into other people participating.

*And what did it take to formally establish a group?*

Basically, all we did was offer our home as the place. We were not founders, so to speak, in that regard. These people who'd been in Sierra Club other places knew the organization. They got whatever the home office said you had to have to start a charter, and they formed a Steering Committee and had a Conservation Committee, an Outings Committee, a Program Committee. They had monthly meetings in town somewhere, slide shows or people speaking, and then an extensive outings program from short day hikes to three-day back packs and that kind of

thing, and a newsletter. It became a bonafide, non-profit organization with many members within the first year. It was always really a flourishing group. That taught us how to enjoy the out-of-doors in southern Nevada, through the Sierra Club hikes. We went on those a lot.

*Say more about what it taught you about the out-of-doors. Was there something different about the out-of-doors there?*

Well, yes, to be comfortable with it, because I'd grown up in the Mid-West where you were in forests of maple and oak trees and heavy humidity and lots of water and rivers and things, and then Hawaii, which was very lush. This terrain, at first, outside of Las Vegas was pretty ominous. I mean, you just didn't know what was out there.

In fact, we had a really unique experience, and to this day I can't believe that we did this. We put the kids in the car and we headed (this must have been the first few weeks we were there) west, and we saw these beautiful mountains out there, these *bands* of color. It's only fifteen miles from town. We went out West Charleston and all the pavement ended pretty soon. There was a wash, and there was a dirt road that then kind of wandered on out there. That dirt road basically followed the terrain: it had not been carved out into a flat, nice road. It climbed a hill, and then it *dropped*, substantially. It was still a driveable road, but you didn't know where it went. I mean, it disappeared. There were other lower mountains before you and the big bands of color, so you weren't quite sure where that road went. We had read in the paper about a couple of people whose bodies had been found out there, either from hiking accidents or something.

Red Rock Canyon was a place we had read about and you could see it, and it just

looked beautiful. So we took the kids, we went out in the car, and we got to the top of this hill, and we stopped. We got out of the car, and we looked, and we turned around and went home. We really did not know what was there, and so we didn't feel comfortable exploring. We weren't sure where the road went. [laughter] It was really strange. It was just an open country. It was desert. It wasn't unfriendly, but just was unknown . . . is the word, I guess. When we did that it must have been, obviously, before we connected with the Sierra Club types.

The other thing that I did early on was connect with Girl Scouting. I did not want to have a Brownie troop. My daughters . . . well, my oldest was Brownie age, and I really preferred working with older girls. So I connected with the scouting office there, and I agreed to take a junior troop if someone would take my girls into Brownies.

I worked with Scouts at the Robert E. Lake School. Through that, we connected with some people who lived out in Red Rock, in Calico Basin, which is a smaller basin off to the north of the main road into Red Rock Canyon. There were a number of people living there on like half-acre or quarter-acre sites. There were several springs, and the Scouts owned one of the springs or had a right to camp at the spring in that Calico Basin. Through this one family that lived out there and then the Scout area, I ended up taking Scouts out into that area and became more familiar with it.

Very quickly, I learned what was around that bend where we had stopped the first time, that there was actually a little community of Blue Diamond. If you went far enough, you could make a turn and come right back into town. There was nothing to be afraid of particularly, but it was a new learning experience to get used to the out-of-doors

there. It was beautiful. I just loved it, but I didn't know it very well, so I needed to get to know it. So I did.

*And this was a group that could help you then, because they knew how to deal with the desert?*

Right. Between Scouting and Sierra Club, we did a lot in a hurry, really.

The other thing we did was, every Monday Sam did not work. He had the hours in the office that the older doctor did not. Dr. Kaufman worked all day on Monday, so we took our VW bug and a county road map and a picnic lunch, and every Monday when we'd put the kids in school, we took off. We started exploring Clark County. We would go down these roads and end up in these little mining camps and dumps and washes and creeks and dead ends. Then we'd mark in purple colored pencil that night the route we'd taken that day on the map. I still have that map with all of its little purple trails on it. We did that for nine months—every Monday we went somewhere, just about. We just loved it. We got very acquainted with it in a hurry.

Some of it was down toward Laughlin, in beautiful sandstone and limestone canyons down there, one called Keyhole Canyon. It's very smooth, and it's used for rock climbing. We were down there right before Thanksgiving, I think, probably that first winter we were there. We sat up on these huge sandstone rocks and just looked out over the expanse, and we just loved it. To be out in November in mild weather and doing that kind of thing was just wonderful.

It just started several years of family exploration. First with the VW, and then we had a station wagon, and then we had an International Travelall, which we got by the time we were family camping. Sam and I would sleep in the back of the Travelall, and

we had a tent for the girls, and we ventured into weekends.

The first weekend that we really did was with the Sierra Club to Wheeler Peak in White Pine County. That particular time we had a house guest, a young man from Kenya. There had been an ad in the paper for giving hospitality to some foreign student who was on his way to UNR, and they needed families to take him for a week. So we had him for the time that we went to Mt. Wheeler, and he was a delightful young man. We corresponded for some time afterwards. I cannot remember his name.

There must have been thirty people in the party of car pooling. We camped by Baker Creek. Of course, this was then called Mt. Wheeler Scenic Area. It wasn't a national park. The Lehman Caves nearby were a national monument. We climbed to Wheeler Peak that day, which is quite a climb. Carla was about eight years old, and she signed in the register where we all signed at the top. She was very proud to sign the register at the top, and then quite disgusted to find that a baby's name had been entered in the register by its parents, who had carried it in a backpack. She just felt that wasn't fair, that she did all the work and the baby still got his name in the book, too.

Jan was never as enthusiastic about the hiking. There was a lot of shale, and it's *really* quite a climb toward the top of Wheeler (13,063 feet). I'm not sure she made it all the way, but she started out with us anyway. No, I think she stayed down at Stella Lake. The boy from Kenya, though, went all the way to the top, too, and that was a big thrill for him.

We camped on the ground. We just had sleeping bags and everything by the creek. We found out the next morning how really frightened the boy from Kenya was. You would not camp on the ground in Kenya like we did, because of other animals and varmints

of some kind. Anyway, he did not sleep much, but it was a great, great weekend, and we have colored pictures of that and everything. Other trips that we did were going to Toroweap, which is on the north rim of the Grand Canyon or in that area—that was another weekend outing—another one to Bryce and further into Utah Escalante country.

The first weekend I remember just our family going alone was to Beaver Dam State Park up in Lincoln County. It was like on Memorial Day weekend. We saw more snakes there that weekend than I've seen since. We saw about four snakes that weekend. You just don't see snakes in Nevada when you are out camping and hiking, for the most part, but we saw them that weekend. That was pretty exciting.

We continued then toward the end of this decade of the 1960s. The girls were at an age where they really liked horses, and they took horseback riding lessons in Las Vegas. They were very put out that we lived on a golf course, because a number of their friends had horses and lived on acre ranchettes where they just had their horses at home, or people would board horses around. We never got to that point, but we got acquainted with a family in Lincoln County that were operating something called the Williams Ranch, and they were attempting to make it a family dude ranch. It had been a very historic property owned by state Senator Nores way back in Nevada history. They had acquired it and were attempting to make something out of it as a resort. I think the way I found them was through Paul Laxalt.

I was appointed to the Park Commission, and in 1968 Paul Laxalt took Thalia Dondero, who also was appointed to the commission about the same time I was, and me with him on a campaign trip up to Lincoln County. He also had Cameron Batjer, who was running

for Supreme Court at that point and a good friend. We flew to Lincoln County and went around and looked at the state parks and politicked and talked with people. It was arranged that we would have breakfast at the Williams Ranch—this group with Paul Laxalt. We had pork chops and bacon and sausage and fruit and pancakes, just the most ultimate in a country resort style breakfast you can imagine, in this kitchen of this camp. It was just a *great* time.

We got acquainted with the family and ended up sending our girls up there for about three summers right at the age when they loved the horses. They would go up there, and they would each have their own horse for the time they were there. They had a riding ring and a rodeo practice area. One year they entered the local rodeo while they were there, so that was just heaven for them, and they stayed in a kind of a bunk house. They stayed maybe three weeks, something like that, and there were other children there of their age.

We got to know this family really well, so we would drive up there, drop the girls off, and then Sam and I would go on by ourselves. That's when we explored Jarbidge and the Schell Range, and we first went to the Rubys and Wild Horse Reservoir—all of northeastern Nevada, kind of our own summer camping. Now I'd been up there some as part of the Park Commission by that time, so I knew my way around a little bit, but it was all a new experience, and we both loved that very, very much.

*As a family, you really got to know Nevada, all of the state. Go back and tell me about getting involved with the parks.*

I think the initial thing would've been the Girl Scouting—going out to Red Rock with Girl Scouts and getting to meet this family

who lived in the Calico Basin. They had a crusade. They knew that there were valuable archaeological artifacts in the canyon itself, and they really wanted to preserve those, for one thing. And then they also wanted to turn Red Rock Canyon into a park and build an interpretive center. I mean, they had some real strong feelings about this. At that point in time, Red Rock was just plain old BLM [Bureau of Land Management] land. No special designation. Managed by the BLM office in Las Vegas.

K. K. Miller and his family lived in Calico Basin. He was an older man by then. They had a young daughter in her twenties. I can't think of his wife's name. They were *intense*, and they already had some connections with people who cared. They did not belong to the Sierra Club. They were not joiners. They were real individualists, but through them we met other people who were interested in this kind of thing.

There were no archaeologists in the state of Nevada at that point in time. There had been archaeologists come in and do digs and go back, like Harrington and others from California, but the Red Rock area had not been explored particularly. Within the next couple of years something called the Nevada Archeological Survey was funded, and a number of archaeologists came into the state: notably, Dick Brooks (Richard Brooks), who came to UNLV to do the archeological work in southern Nevada; and Sheilagh Brooks to teach at UNLV; and Donald Tuohy was here in northern Nevada at the state museum; and there were others. There was a whole series of archaeologists who came in to do this statewide survey.

What happened in southern Nevada before they arrived is that we helped form this group led by K. K. Miller and others—an amateur archeology group called Archeo



Nevada. Up here in northern Nevada, there is a similar group called Am Arcs. They both formed about the same time and were just plain old interest groups on the part of citizens who were interested in archeology and who weren't the pot hunter type but just wanted to go out and dig for fun.

*They wanted to really preserve what was out there?.*

Right. Right. And understand what was there. K. K. Miller was able to get an archeological dig going that fall—that was about 1964 or 1965 in Red Rock. He was not a qualified archeologist, and he knew that. So they brought in someone, or they approved the plan to put out the grids, and they went down layer by layer and kept things in bags as you found it and, you know, did it all the right way.

We were part of that dig. We went out and camped. I think the impetus for this was that the BLM had a little money to put in a picnic site, and they were going to put it at this place called Willow Spring. There were petroglyphs on the walls or pictographs, both, out there all over the canyon, and K. K. Miller really felt that was a valuable Indian site. Before they were going to put the picnic site in, he wanted to see that it got a proper examination. And so we were part of the group that did that, supervised by someone who knew what they were doing. We joined the Archeo Nevada, and we did a lot of the field trips with them, and that was something the kids could go on, too.

We found all kinds of arrowheads and stones—grinding stones called metates—and became very familiar with identifying the mescal pits in which the Indians baked the root of some of the plants. They would sit around those pits and carve their stones or

do their work. There were a lot of those out in that area. They're out there in Red Rock today. If you've got an eye for it, you can see them. So that became a part of our out-of-doors, finding the Native American stuff and becoming more familiar with that.

Right at this time, there had been several major pieces of legislation passed in Washington, like in 1962 and 1963—the Multiple Use Act, the Land Sale Act and the Wilderness Act, which was passed in 1964. All of this mandated for the first time the land use agencies of the BLM, the Forest Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service to inventory their resources and really look at what they had, and then determine in a multiple use sense the scale of priorities for certain areas. BLM also was to look at what land should be sold off for urban development, because they had land all the way down into downtown Las Vegas, and there was just BLM land *everywhere* around the town. So there was a lot of activity by the offices of these federal agencies.

One of the things the BLM staff initiated was a kind of master inventory of what they called the Spring Mountain Planning Unit. They designated about 10,000 acres that was the immediate Red Rock Bluffs that you see, which is the unique land form out there, and then the canyon right at the base and some marginal buffer land went beyond that. This connected right up to the Toiyabe Forest, which included Mt. Charleston. So you had both BLM and Forest Service managing a huge area out there. That was very unique. The BLM created a sub-committee to work on recommendations for administration, development, protection, and maintenance of public domain lands in the Red Rock area. This group included representatives of Clark County Parks and Recreation, the Desert



Game Range, the Sierra Club, League of Women Voters, and Nevada Fish and Game. The work of this group resulted in a major report to the BLM state Director. I was the League's representative on this committee.

There were very, very important private in-holdings right at the base of one of the most beautiful peaks. An area called Pine Creek was all private land. An old shack had been used there, but no one really lived there. Then there was the Spring Mountain Ranch, which was just down to the south of that and which had been owned by Lum and Abner [Lum and Abner were stars of a popular radio comedy show which aired nationally on NBC, ABC, CBS & Mutual for 24 years beginning in 1931], and then a woman named Vera Krupp, whose husband had been in the manufacturing of German munitions. Ultimately, it was sold to Howard Hughes. Maybe it was owned by Howard Hughes at that point, but maybe Vera Krupp, when we first started talking about it. Eventually it was purchased by a car dealer, Fletcher Jones, with the idea of developing it into condominiums. I think he knew that he'd never get that far, so it was a leverage to get his money back out of the government once everybody started yelling about it.

There was this feeling that the downtown businessmen, (I can't remember specific names) and some of the city "fathers" (elected officials) were really looking at buying up this land and building wall-to-wall condominiums out there and calling it the Beverley Hills of Las Vegas. A group of us just felt that shouldn't happen, but it was very vulnerable because it was just plain old BLM land. At that time you could acquire it in some different ways. The city or county could acquire it at a very low amount per acre on something called Recreation and Public Purposes Act. They acquired school sites that way and park sites right in the city. So there was quite a bit of

discussion about where Red Rock's destiny was to be, and acquiring the private areas seemed to be high priority, too.

Well, there was another place further down in Red Rock Canyon called Bonnie Springs Ranch. This guy Al Levinson owned it for years, and it was a pretty tacky little animal zoo, just an attraction. He was trying to make a living off of it. He never did sell—it is still operating there today. But the other properties (Pine Creek Canyon and Spring Mountain Ranch) did eventually get acquired by the state, and I was part of making that happen.

About this time, the state park system for the first time was really taking quite a bit of initiative on a number of things. There was a man named Colonel Thomas Miller who was Chair. He was a retired Army Colonel from Reno, who was just a go-getter and had a real intense passion about doing something about state parks. There was Valley of Fire in southern Nevada and that was it, I believe for this part of the state. Other ideas were that Red Rock ought to be a state park. A group of us went to the public hearing on the Red Rock plan, and I remember speaking out, though it was scary to do so. The tenor of it was that we felt southern Nevada needed more park land, needed to be protecting these areas. It wasn't getting its fair share of stuff. I mean, this is an age-old story. We were all very concerned in preserving Red Rock Canyon.



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## LEARNING THE ROPES: GRASSROOTS POLITICAL ACTION

About that time, I met some people in the League of Women Voters. The League had just been organized in 1964 by a group of women who had belonged to Leagues in other places. Carole Bailey and Jackie Stormson were two of the early leaders. There was an active League group up in Reno and Carson City, who then monitored the League's actions down there the first year. The state President was a woman named Esther Nicholson, who had been the state President of the League in New Jersey as well. Her husband had retired to Nevada, and she just kind of started over on the League leadership and was willing to be very involved again. Maya Miller, who was President of the Reno League at that time, lived in Washoe Valley.

I was not a part of this initial group at all. I knew nothing about the League. I was very apolitical. I had voted absentee, the times I did vote, because we were in the military. Missouri had open primaries. I never had to declare a party. I just was very apolitical. It didn't mean anything to me. It was not a big issue for Sam either. He'd been in college and

medical school, the Army. We did get absentee ballots and vote, but we didn't know much about what was going on. However, I really was interested in Red Rock and seeing that something happened there.

So anyway, somebody said to me, "Well, you really do need to join the League, because they've just formed, and they're going to study state parks." The League would take on various topics, deliberately, from time to time and really dig in and find out what was going on and develop a consensus and a position paper. I joined the League because of that and began to get acquainted and learn what state parks was all about.

One of the first things I did was organize a survey of people in Las Vegas as to whether they would use Red Rock Canyon as a park if it were so designated. I remember joining the League and agreeing to work on this state park issue, and then a group of us coming up with this idea of maybe talking with the BLM, that we needed to have some feel for community consensus: Did anyone else agree with us?

There was a big annual thing called the Jaycee Fair, which was an event at the convention center, just lots of commercial trade products and the usual stuff with a carnival and everything. The League got a booth, and I designed the questionnaire to ask the people of Las Vegas, "What do you think about Red Rock Canyon?" Over two or three days, we gathered 750 responses. It was a *major* thing.

*Because there was a lot of interest?*

No. Just because there were a lot of people at the fair, and we just stopped them and asked them to fill out the questionnaire and just kept going. We gathered all this, we tallied it all by hand—there were no computer databases in those days—and took the results to the BLM. Of course, they were delighted! It showed a very *strong* position in favor of protecting the area and that the community would use it. We did that in a competent manner and quickly and the final product was very positive.

Well, that drew the attention of some people, and it wasn't long before I was contacted by Governor Paul Laxalt's office and asked if I would serve on the State Park Commission. The timing was such that they had an opening in southern Nevada, and I also had registered to vote and had registered Republican.

I remember when I did register, they said, "Well, what party?" I said, "Do we have to do that?" They said, "Yes, or you can register Independent or Non-Partisan." I came from the only Republican county in Missouri. My parents had been Republican and, again, it meant very little to me, so I just said, "Well, I guess Republican." That probably was a positive thing when Paul Laxalt was looking for people to appoint. (Actually, before that

there was another committee that I was appointed to, but it didn't directly relate to Red Rock, so we'll come back to that.) I went onto the Park Commission—I think it was 1965—and I stayed on it until I was elected to the Legislature in 1972, and then I could not serve on both. It was an absolutely fabulous experience and gave me a whole new launching pad to learn Nevada, now through an official channel. There was staff that sent me briefings and took the Commission on tours of various areas in the state. My way got paid to meetings. I had a card with my name on it that said Park Commissioner.

It was a very empowering kind of experience for me. I mean, I was "somebody," and I enjoyed that. The other people on the commission were very interesting people. Thalia Dondero went on it about the same time I did, and then there was a doctor or psychiatrist here in Reno, Dr. Leslie Gould. Bob Forson went on as a commissioner, who was also head of North Las Vegas Parks and Recreation and who was just a wonderful friend for many years. Clif Segerblom, the water colorist from Boulder City, was on. Chris Sheerin, a newspaper editor in Elko, was on it. And oh, a woman here in Reno, up on the hill in the southwest part of Reno, Audrey Harris. She has a little mini-park named after her—that little circle where you stop and look out over the valley. She was on the Park Commission, too.

It was just a *wonderful* experience, and good, nice people, a very good staff headed by Eric Cronkhite. It was at a time when the Parks Commission was coming into its own. They got some appropriations to do master planning of some of the areas. They were able to acquire some new parks. Something called the Land and Water Conservation Fund was just beginning as a national appropriation,

which came to all states to be used for acquisition of park lands.

My very first contact with the State Park Commission was an absolute riot. I get concerned about Red Rock. I meet others who care about it. Somebody tells me to join the League. I join the League. We do this survey. I get involved in the League committee, and then I learn there's something called the Parks Commission and that we should find out about it. One of the things the League would do is go visit government entities that had the power over the issues they were studying and act as observers. They would simply go to the meetings and listen and learn what it was all about. Well, I got a notice that the Park Commission was going to meet in Pioche, and I had just joined the League and had just become a part of this committee. An older woman that was in the League, named Etta Southard, somehow connected with me and we decided we were going to go to Pioche to that meeting. We got up at dawn this particular morning and drove to the courthouse in Pioche to observe the State Park Commission meeting. Well, nobody ever came to those commission meetings, you know, and here were these women from Las Vegas. Not only did we go to the meeting, when we got into the room we went up and sat with the commissioners at the table where the official meeting was going to take place, because we didn't know any better. I mean, we didn't know that the Commissioner sat there, and the audience sat somewhere else.

I had no comprehension of government, of the citizen's role in government, of the citizen's role in a commission like that—the public's role. It was a very foreign thing to me. I had not experienced or observed any of that. All of a sudden, here we were sitting with the Commissioner; it was chaired by the psychiatrist from Reno. Later, we all

just *laughed* about this, because he was so gracious.

Nobody else in Pioche came to that meeting, so he just kind of asked us to introduce ourselves. [laughter] Finally, I began to realize about the middle of the meeting: "I think we're in the wrong place; I think we ought to be sitting out there somewhere," because they were taping the meeting, and there were formal motions and all this stuff. I mean, it was *very* embarrassing, *very* embarrassing at the time—as the day went on and I began to realize that we weren't exactly following protocol. Well, they were amused [laughter] a great deal by it, but also impressed that two women would drive from Las Vegas up to learn about state parks. We carried back whatever news we found out about what they were doing, and then I moved from that pretty quickly to understanding a lot—getting on the mailing list, getting the minutes and understanding what it was all about. Within a year, I was a member of that commission myself, but that was really funny.

The year before, 1964 I guess, through this activity with the Sierra Club and BLM and Red Rock, while Grant Sawyer was Governor, the Congress passed the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Part of the act was that every state had to create a coordinating committee to determine how the money was going to get spent in that state. This was to be a *lot* of money, and it was. In fact, I think there's still Land and Water money available. It was an incredible thing. They put the off-shore oil leasing revenues and several other sources of money into this fund, and this helped fund parks all over the country.

There was no logical group in existence, so Governor Sawyer appointed something called the Nevada Outdoor Recreation Coordinating Committee to meet the letter of the law so that Nevada could get its share of the money,

and I was appointed to that. I can't tell you today how that happened, or where I was that caused somebody to notice me. It had to be some mixture of the League and Sierra Club. It was before the Park Commission. The Park Commission was in existence, but that first year they created this brand new committee just to deal with the Land and Water monies. It was a rather large group, about fifteen people or something. I was appointed to it, but I don't think I had met Grant Sawyer. Somebody gave him a list of names, and he chose out of them, and I was one of the names.

The first meeting of that group that I attended was a very special day for me. It was in Elko, and we flew there in the Fish and Game airplane from Las Vegas. Wayne Kirch was one of the members of this committee as well, and at that time he was "Mr. Fish and Game" in the state. He was head of the Fish and Game Commission and just a really powerful man in southern Nevada and statewide. Now there is the Wayne Kirch Wildlife Management Area named after him up in northern Nye and southern White Pine County, in that area near Sunnyside. He was getting along in years, but still in the prime of his political activity and just a powerhouse. I can't remember who the third person was, but the state pilot for the Fish and Game airplane flew us up.

My introduction to northern Nevada was on the opening day of hunting season, which was about the second Saturday in October. We flew at about 7,000 feet all the way from Las Vegas to Elko, which means that we flew in the valleys between the mountain ranges. There were gold ribbons coming down out of all the mountains. Because it was fall, the aspens had turned and it was the most *incredible* sight. They were in radio contact with all of the Fish and Game wardens all over the state, because it was opening day of hunting, so we got

these reports from other parts of the state via radio like, "Here's what going on in Kingston Canyon," or "Here's what's going on up in the Santa Rosas." Just general monitoring reports. The whole thing was just *fascinating*.

And the *view*! I mean, oh! It was just *incredible*. We got to Elko, and just in the last few days when I started sorting my slides, I found I have the slide that I took of the Humboldt River from the air on that trip. It looked like a bed of snakes. It was just twists and turns, and brown, and a little bit of rabbit brush blooming along the edges, but just an incredible mosaic on the ground that was indeed the Humboldt River.

This was even before the Park Commission, so this was my first opportunity to be important, you know, [laughter] to be considered important. We were taken to the Commercial Hotel because the head of the hotel was also on this committee; Owen Probert, I think his name was. People came from other parts of the state, and we met and did our thing. That group met about three times, I think, and did allocate Land and Water money for Nevada. Then the following year, which would've been 1965, the Legislature chose to give the duty of allocating Land and Water money to the State Park Commission, so they did away with the Outdoor Recreation Coordinating Committee.

It was that year or the following year that I went on the Park Commission, so there was this sequence of movement into these park governing bodies that I just really enjoyed *very, very much, very much*, and got to know people and got to see government in action.

My first visit to the Legislature was 1965. The League instituted something called League Day at the Legislature, and about thirty-five of us flew up for the day from Las Vegas to Carson City. The Legislature was still meeting in the old capitol. There was a



large active League in northern Nevada, so there were a ton of us down there for the day, probably seventy-five or so. I think I even went to a Senate Finance Committee meeting to hear what they were doing about the state parks' budget. That was my first taste of the Legislature and the Legislative process.

*Do you remember what you thought of it?*

Oh, I thought it was pretty exciting. I didn't in any way yet feel I belonged there. I was an outsider looking in. I was a very green member of the League of Women Voters, kind of just getting my feet wet on learning basic government, but the League was just this incredible vehicle for doing that.

Now in the meantime, I had my other project in Las Vegas, the library. We'll back up in a minute and deal with that, but it all came together on this day, because I testified on a bill relating to the library when I went up for that League Day at the Legislature. So I did a number of things for that first day.

After we were there and observed, we went to Maya Miller's ranch for dinner. What an *incredible* introduction to northern Nevada—the trip to Elko and then the trip to Carson and Washoe Valley.

*Maya Miller's ranch is in Washoe Valley? Describe that a little bit for me?*

Oh, my! Washoe Pines. *Beautiful* pines that come right down the mountainside. The houses are nestled in the pines, very rustic. It had been a divorcee ranch which Maya and her husband purchased basically for taxes, I think the story is, back in the early forties, and then they had turned it into a camp. Part of the time, they had a summer camp for children that was inter-racial and inter-class, in that they always found a way to get children of low

income families to be able to come and mix with children of Congressmen who flew out from New York and other parts of the East. I mean, they just had this wonderful reputation for this great camp. They had horses. They put up tepees, and the kids slept in tepees on the grounds. There's a large log cabin on the ranch that was there when Will James lived there and wrote *Smoky*. It has all these elements that are just wonderful, and it goes right up the side of the mountain.

Maya's home is just this very open plan of a kitchen, dining, living quarters—just all there with glass all the way around it. She had added onto a really old farmhouse at one point in time, and she lived and worked and entertained there. You never knew who you would meet. People from all over the world, *always* interesting people, and always people who were intensely involved in some cause or another. She was President of the Reno League. I was back there many, many, many times, but that was a very special first.

*She sounds like a kindred spirit to you and your values.*

Oh, right. Right. We met through that. Either Maya or Esther had to come down to our League meetings on a monthly basis, because we were what we called provisional. The first year, until we met certain criteria, we were not a full-fledged League, and so we had to have a supervisor at each meeting from another League somewhere.

*Maybe we should stop and pick up the library thread and bring us back up to this special day at the Legislature then, because we don't have that piece.*

OK. The first year that we lived in Clark County, one of the things that we did was

try to connect with the library services, and there were none. We had purchased our home in the unincorporated area of the county, in what was called Paradise Town. We found out that there were no library services for the unincorporated part of the county at all, which actually had 80,000 people at that point in time. We found out later that there weren't library services because that is not a traditional county service, and we weren't paying any taxes to have a library.

Through the Unitarian Fellowship we created something called a Social Action Committee, which every Unitarian group has, which is looking at social action projects of one kind or another that have to do with equality and equity and doing away with prejudice and things like that. It happened that some of the Sierra Club people also were part of this Social Action Committee at the church. At one of these meetings, we said, "You know, something that's missing in this community is a library."

That little committee decided to find out what we could do to get a library. The first thing we did was go to the woman who ran the Las Vegas library—or who had founded the Las Vegas library. Her name was Beda Cornwall, and she lived up near the Jewish temple up on Oakey. She was a real veteran club woman in Las Vegas, and I found out later that she had had this committee and did what they needed to do to influence the city fathers several years before to get a library at all in the city of Las Vegas. They did have a city library, and it was in a low building behind City Hall down near where the freeway was going in.

We knew also that we could get a card in that library *if* we paid five dollars and got a property owner in the city to vouch for our good character. That was the system in 1963, 1964.

*Which meant if you were a newcomer, that was nearly impossible unless you knew someone.*

Well, right. I mean, you had to go sort that out, and then you hoped they had a book you wanted, [laughter] because it was very inadequate in terms of supplying contemporary books or classics or whatever.

Anyway, we met with her, and that's when we found out. We really went to her to say, "You know, we need library service too. Can't you provide library service to us in our part of town?"

She said, "No! You're not paying taxes. It's in the county. We have all we can do to take care of our own library needs." She was very nice, but it didn't make sense to help us with the library.

So somehow we connected with the State Librarian. At that time the State Librarian was Mildred Heyer, and she lived in Carson City. She came to Las Vegas and met with our group. Of course, she was very excited to find some people who wanted libraries down there. She told us what the Nevada law said one had to do to create a new library. It basically said that you had to gather the signatures of property owners on petitions that would add up to 51 percent of the property value in the proposed area to be served. So again, having had no experience in anything like this, we didn't understand the enormity of that at all or quite what it meant, but we set out to do it.

This was a small group, mostly women, but there were some men in it, and we designed a petition that people could sign. Then we went to the Civil District Attorney at the courthouse who, according to the law, needed to approve of what we were doing—needed to be in on it from the beginning so when the signatures came back in, he could endorse that it had been properly done. He helped us with the wording of the petition.

His name was John Porter, a wonderful man. He was very kind and very helpful.

The petitions were like eight and a half by fourteen in size and could hold a number of names on each one. You had to get them to print their name, and you had to get them to sign their name. Then you had to get the address of the property that they owned. There was a column that we had to leave for the value of that property, which most people had no clue what the value was on their property to just rattle it off, so that was a blank.

First we had to design a boundary for the taxing district, and it was all the unincorporated area in Clark County, so it did not include the City of Las Vegas, the City of Henderson, Boulder City, the City of North Las Vegas. And for some reason, it did not include Overton—the area of Overton up near Lake Mead, which had its own special district of some kind. But it included everything else: all of Paradise Valley; all of what we call Enterprise, which was over near Blue Diamond; all the road up toward Mt. Charleston; toward Tonopah up to the test site; all the area near Sunrise Mountain. Just all the BLM land, all the empty spaces out there. It was *huge*. Just huge.

Then we got somehow from the Assessor's Office what the value was that we had to go for, and I cannot remember that figure right now, but it was big—millions and millions and millions—that we had to get represented by these signatures. People were being taxed at 35 percent of the value of their property, so whatever their property value was, we could only count 35 percent of it as I recall.

Nothing was automated. We started our plan, naïve as it was, because we're really saying to people, "Will you sign here saying that you want to raise your taxes to have a public library?" That's what we were doing.

Fortunately, the tax rate was not at the constitutional limit of \$5.00. It was at about \$4.79. So we didn't have to bump something else off in order to get this tax on. I think the law said if we got enough signatures, then the county commissioners were mandated to create this taxing district. They had to tax at a certain rate: it was five cents per \$100 of evaluation that first year, so people were clearly being asked to raise their own taxes.

So we thought, "well, we'll go get a few hundred homeowners, and that'll show that the little guy wants this. Then we'll hit up a few hotels, and we'll have it." Oh, my! Oh, my! [laughter] Well, we started out. Let's say *my* neighborhood as an example. We had purchased our house for \$33,000, so when we signed, of course, there was one piece of property for the two of us. We had to go to the Assessor's Office, look up our piece of property in the rolls, and then find the value of it, and then do 35 percent of that. So we got about eleven thousand something on our petition from our house, which was a *nice* house relatively speaking. In the smaller tracts in Paradise Valley, there were a lot of homes at around ten to twelve thousand from which you'd get three or four thousand on your petition for value, and our goal was millions and millions.

So we went down, pored over the Assessor's rolls to see who owned all this property and who owned the big pieces that had lots of value. And *what* an education. First of all, the utilities owned *millions* and millions—the telephone company, the power company, the gas company. Then there were just landowners that had section after section after section, most of whom were out of state. Then you would come to a tract, a residential area, and you would have each individual property owner and their address and the

value of their house. Then you had the Strip with all kinds of stuff there.

We began to realize that it wasn't just getting a few. It was going to be a *massive*, massive job; so then we said, "Well, let's go after some big ones," [laughter] and so we went to the telephone company. I'll never forget the day we went there, and we had this little spiel, and there would be two of us go together. We would be, you know, little citizens of the community wanting a library, and the head of the telephone company looked at me and said, "Why, we couldn't do that. We'd have to raise the rates." I mean, he had *no* sympathy for us at all. I walked out of there crying. How could anyone be that way, so callous to the needs of a community, but he was.

It was a really major day when we went to Southwest Gas, and we cultivated an acquaintance with a guy who was their legal counsel, I believe, and he was a black man named Earle White. He thought it was a great idea, and he went to bat and he got Southwest Gas to sign. It was just incredible. He went on later to be a District Judge. I think maybe he still is a District Judge in Clark County. So we found some friends also. Of course, Bill Laub was head of Southwest Gas and just an incredibly important community leader. I don't know if the decision ever got to Bill Laub, but we did get Southwest Gas, which was a *huge* corporation and landowner.

Then we had to go write all of their property holdings on the petition, and then find the value of it. It was hours and hours and hours of accounting kinds of work. We had a whole corps of people who did nothing but sit up at the Assessor's Office and take these petitions that we'd gotten signed and figure out the value of each petition, name by name.

*So you had two groups. One group out getting signatures, working on these large owners, and then another group to do the accounting?*

Right. Right. Well, we did that for about six months, and we had maybe one-tenth of what we needed. I mean, it was never going to work. It's just incredible how many owners there were. They were all over the world, and it wasn't that easy to get the big ones or even some of the small ones. Some people didn't want their taxes raised for *anything*.

We went back to this John Porter very discouraged. While there was no time limit, we could see this taking ten years easily. [laughter] Somehow that didn't seem like that was going to work that well. So we went to him and just said, "Look, this isn't going to work! We've got all this, but it's just a drop in the bucket as to what we need."

He said, "Well, let's look at the law in some other states." He pulled out the California law and looked at it, and he said, "California law looks a lot easier." The California law required that you get ten percent of the property, instead of fifty-one, of the signatures on the tax rolls on your petitions. Then you put a legal notice in the paper and announce your intent to create the district. If a significant number of people protest, then it has to go on the ballot. There was a process to protect against misuse or against the very few having the power over the many. It was a reasonable process.

He said, "This sounds really good. You'll just have to go get the law changed." And I said, "How do you do that?" I mean, it was just a whole new world. [laughter] I knew nothing about any of this, and this was in January of 1965.

He said, "Well, it just so happens the Legislature just went into session, and Vernon Bunker is the name of the Chair of the Clark

County delegation. You write him a letter, and you tell him about your committee and about your work, and he'll get a bill drafted."

I had a little portable typewriter, and I got it out and set it on the sewing machine and wrote my letter to this Vernon Bunker and said we had this little committee of people in Las Vegas that think we ought to have a library. We've met with Mildred Heyer, and we've met with John Porter, and here's what John thinks we ought to do, and Mildred Heyer can work with you in Carson to draft the bill or whatever. That's what we did.

I had never met him or anyone else in the Legislature, but the bill was drafted, and when I went up for League Day at the Legislature, they had a hearing. The committee met under the stairway: there were no committee rooms in the old capitol, except for Ways and Means and Senate Finance. The rest of them just kind of met where they could, when they could, and nobody knew when they met. It was a very, very "old boy" type thing.

I let them know I was coming somehow. That League training was sinking in, you know. R. Guild Gray was on the committee, and Edward M. Fike was on the committee. I can't remember others, but they both had other very prominent positions in Nevada government. Guild Gray had been Clark County Superintendent of Schools. Ed went on to be Lieutenant Governor and then was indicted for something, and I don't where he is now. They were on the committee, and they didn't know me from Adam, and I just said, "We have this group in Las Vegas that thinks we need a library, and we've tried this one route, and it's not reasonable, and the California law seems to be reasonable." They recommended passage of the bill. It passed both houses of the Legislature, and it was signed by Governor Sawyer in April of that year (1965).

Now there was some opposition to it, namely from Clay Lynch, who was the City Manager of North Las Vegas. He was a very ambitious, very strong leader for North Las Vegas during those years and very adept at creating special taxing districts and getting money out. He knew all kinds of ways to move the city along. He knew the significance of creating a special library district, which is what we were asking for. This was *enabling* authority. Then we had to go do all the work, but the enabling authority made it much easier for us to do our work. Our area, once we got enough signatures, would be a special taxing district, and that would block his getting his hands on money that could be put in other special taxing districts that could serve North Las Vegas. He could see that coming down the line. It did not fit with his game plan, and so he opposed the bill. Later, when we had enough signatures and it did go into a legal notice stage, he wrote a formal protest and all of that, but there was almost no one else that did so. It did not have an impact.

Anyway, the bill passed. This is an example of an absolute nobody, a little committee of people having a need, going to various people, getting help, getting information, following the system and making it happen. [laughter] I mean, it was incredible. I didn't realize all that significance until later.

Then we went out, and we started the petitions again. I think we were able to use the signatures we'd gotten up to that point in this new system, but then we had to keep going and get tons and tons more.

*Even though you had like maybe a tenth of what you needed for the original bill, you still weren't anywhere near what you needed for the new law?*

Oh, no! No. I think for this it was \$21.8 million we had to have on the tax rolls that was



represented in the signatures. It took us about a year to get them, but we did. There were sixty or seventy people involved in working with the petitions. Some would maybe only do their area or something, but there were a *lot* of people, and we still had to go down and check all this against the Assessor's Office.

We got to the point where we were about five or six million out—like we had about fourteen, fifteen million, and we were really getting up there—when the Sahara Hotel put us over the top. A. A. McCollom was the manager of the Sahara Hotel, and it was part of the Sahara Nevada Corporation. We had an appointment with him, and we explained our case, and we showed him where we were, and he said, “I think every community needs a library, and the Sahara Hotel will sign.” There is a news clipping of a picture taken of me with him signing; it was in the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*. They were worth over five million dollars. Now one high-rise addition to those hotels is worth at least fifteen million or something, but this was back in 1965.<sup>1</sup>

That was just a *huge* boost, and then other people fell into line and decided, “Well, if the Sahara Hotel's going to raise their taxes for a library, then we can afford to do that, too.” And so we got the required number. The County posted the notice. There was almost no protest. The county commissioners had no choice but to create the district, and then they had to appoint a board of trustees to run the district. After they were appointed once, they had to run for election. By this time, I think it was maybe the fall of 1965 or spring of 1966.

Backing up now to the League . . . The League was never officially involved in this library project, although I got involved in the League at the same time because of Red Rock, so a lot of people have always thought that they came together, but it really was a separate project. There were League members

who passed petitions, but it was an ad hoc committee. It was not a League project. It was really grass roots.

But in the meantime I had joined the League. I got involved in the Red Rock issue. I was obviously an eager housewife who had time to become a volunteer, so I was asked to be President of the League in its second year. I joined in the middle of its first year, and the first President was a municipal judge's wife named Kathleen Richards. Some of the really strong people who had been active in the League other places wanted the League to be formed, but they weren't willing to take the presidency. Does that sound familiar?

Yes.

And so they got this woman to be the President, and she really was not up to it. I mean, she was very nice and everything, but did not function in the manner that we really needed.

I joined in the middle of that year. I had a presence from the time I joined, because of my interest in what was going on and the time I now had with the kids in school to do things like this. It just blossomed right away. So they asked me if I would be President [laughter] the second year, and I went home and talked to my husband, and I said, “These people want me to be President of the League.” I didn't know what it meant to be President of a non-profit organization like that at all. I'd worked in the Red Cross. I'd worked in all these other grass roots kinds of things, or I'd organized things, but I had not belonged to a formal organization that had its bylaws and all that kind of stuff. But we talked about it, and the idea really interested me. I wasn't sure I could do it at all, but we agreed that I would say yes.



One of the things that was happening with my husband is that he had his medical practice. Everything was going fine with it. He was also very interested in the community, got involved in the Sierra Club, got very involved in letter writing. That's when the Bureau of Reclamation was talking about damming up the Colorado River in the Grand Canyon, and my husband became the most fabulous letter writer to the newspapers. He got into an argument with the Commissioner of Reclamation in the newspapers, and there were all these really big letters flying back and forth.

He was active in the Sierra Club—he helped in some things—but it quickly became apparent that he had no patience for working in that kind of setting. He is just really very bright, very smart, but you could come together around an issue, and he could pretty quickly see what the answer to that issue was. Well, so, if we know what the answer is, why don't we go do it? This idea of massaging other people's egos and bringing a consensus through the membership so that the board will vote yes and all this, he would have nothing to do with any of that. He was just a loner and he didn't want to spend a lot of time arguing in meetings.

*Total opposite style from yours, which was to work in groups.*

Right, but he (much more than I) often had the answer, [laughter] because I was very unfamiliar with government. Not that he had been real familiar with it, but he was much better read in terms of current events than I. As I look back, this became pretty apparent, and he was very supportive of my doing this [League presidency].

Part of it was that we both had a social conscience, and we both had said we want to

go to a community where we can settle down and raise our family and become a part of it. But it became pretty quickly apparent that he would much rather stay home and be there when the kids got home from school and read all these voluminous reports, if we needed to, to find out what was going on and then come up with the answers . . . that kind of thing. I would be the one that would go out and work with the volunteers in these volunteer organizations: he had no patience for it. He couldn't understand how I could spend an evening letting everybody in the room have their say. I mean, it just was beyond him, so I became the one that kind of carried out the social conscience for the two of us. And that was OK. He was the brains behind a lot of what I did; he gave me a lot of expertise from his knowledge. He could cut right through to the core of what you needed to find out at a public hearing or stuff like that. So he remained very involved in many ways, but the main thing is that he supported me in doing what I did.

*Yes, and was willing to be at home with the kids.*

Right, and then, his mother . . . Have I talked about his mother? [laughter] Up until about 1968 both sets of grandparents came to visit us, and we went to visit them on holidays: it was a very good, traditional relationship all the way around. In 1968 Sam's father, Henry, died in a car crash in L.A. on a rainy night, and the following year Sam's mother, Prudence, moved to Las Vegas. We purchased a condo for her on the International Golf Course, and she moved in and became very close then. She liked to wash and iron and mend, which was incredible.

She really, at the beginning—not openly so much but silently—was very critical of my

getting involved in the community. I was not being the proper mother. There were little ways in which I kind of knew she felt that way. Part of it would have been my also having some feeling of guilt about being gone and knowing I wasn't being the proper mother.

But the fact that Sam was home when the kids got home from school and was there for car pooling when he needed to be, and she would come over and wash and iron and mend, enabled me to feel like I could go do more and more of this, whether it was library or state parks or League of Women Voters. By then I was intensely involved in all three. I was very quickly spending a lot of time on all this.

*Within three years, you were serving on an appointed office and working on the library?*

Yes. Well, we finished the library project. What happened there is that by the time they were ready to appoint the library board, I was obviously a logical person to be on that board, and I chose not to be on it. I said, "No. I cannot be on the board. I've just accepted the presidency of the League of Women Voters." There were good friends of mine on there that had been involved in the campaign, like Louella Schiller, and I remained interested and involved to some degree, but I never played a formal role after that.

Just to kind of end that part of it for this decade, the library board was created about 1966. The library started in a warehouse down by the airport with its inventory of books, and then went to a storefront at the corner of Tropicana and Maryland Parkway, across from the university. That was the first place where the public really came and could get books. By around 1970, they got a Fleischmann Foundation grant (when that money was still functioning around the state, libraries were a major place that Fleischmann

money went) plus some other money and built the Flamingo Library—the first piece of the library system that was built as a library near the corner of Flamingo and Maryland Parkway. I went back and worked for that library in 1979, so we'll come back to that later. That was my first paying job after my husband and I were divorced.

The League consumed me. I loved the organizing; I loved everything about it. Planning and zoning was our very first major local issue that we studied. We studied local parks. We studied school integration. We filed an *amicus* brief with the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People] to integrate the schools in Clark County, and I was subpoenaed to testify in federal court.

*Explain what an amicus brief is.*

Well, it's a friend of the court. It's an option that organizations have to become a party to a legal action. The NAACP had filed suit against the school district to integrate the schools, and the League had done quite a bit of studying of integration and had determined to become a friend—to file along with the NAACP, which was a pretty radical move. That would be about 1968, 1969. That's right at the time the Kerner Commission Report came out, which was the national report that talked about a divided country, black and white, and how we were headed down to ruin because of that. Congress commissioned the report. Kerner was, I think, Governor of Illinois at one point. That report just had a major impact on the whole country.

From the very beginning, we had at least a dozen black members in the League, teachers for the most part. We were very interested in being inter-racial, so we took on the school

integration issue, and not without some conflict, but we did it.<sup>2</sup>

*Describe the conflict a little bit.*

Well, there are always people who want to play safe. People join organizations for different reasons. Some join because they want to socialize, and some join because they really care about a cause, and some join because they like organizing, and so you get all those people mixed in.

The League has a very rigid structure on how it operates. That is both its strength and, to some degree, its weakness. The League had a manual on how to behave; and so, if we're going to have a League, then one of the major elements was that the organization must remain non-partisan. We had people in it who were Democrats, Republicans, whatever, but there was nothing allowed that smacked of partisan endorsement of candidates, of getting involved in campaigning. If you were an officer in the League, you could not be actively engaged in partisan politics at all. Now, members could. You could have an active Democrat, and they could go campaign and do everything else, but if you wanted to be a leader in the League and represent the League in any big way, then you could not do that because, obviously, then the League begins to take on the color of that partisanship.

It was very important to have both political parties in the League. That was always one of the strengths in the early years, that I was Republican. By far the League has more naturally attracted Democratic women—just the whole history of the League, which we're not going to go into right now. The League was started in 1919 by Carrie Chapman Catt as women were completing their victory to get the vote, and she felt there needed to be a new organization to show women how to

vote and how to be good citizens, and so she created the League of Women Voters. She got other people involved, and that's when it started. It has a long, venerable history, but always had conflict around those issues from time to time. Our own League in the late seventies practically broke up because there was a faction that really said, "We are sick and tired of being non-partisan. We feel strongly about these issues. We need to go get candidates that believe in them, and we need to get them elected." We had some really bitter meetings where that conflict arose, but the non-partisanship won out and has continued to win out nationally with that organization. That has really been its strength in being able to be respected for what it does.

The other thing is that you had to study before you could act. There was a very complex procedure. There were three levels. You had to do this at the local level, around your unit of government, which for us was the county. We encompassed Boulder City, Henderson, North Las Vegas. We were the League of Women Voters of Las Vegas Valley, so we were county-wide. The Board of County Commissioners was the powerful body that we looked at as well as the school district which was county-wide. Then the state League looked at state government in all of its elements, all three branches—legislative, executive, and judicial. The national League addressed national issues.

Well, to address issues on all three levels, representatives of the League came together in councils or governing bodies and brought from the grass roots what the League members wanted to do in each of these areas and deliberately chose areas to study. You couldn't do anything else, because that's what you'd chosen, but there could be five or six of those going on at the same time if you're working on local, state, and national levels.

The national would be chosen at the national convention, where all the local leagues sent delegates, and the state would be chosen at a state convention where the state leagues within a state sent delegates.

*OK. But this issue of the integration of the schools was one that was crossing all of those levels at that point, or not?*

We deliberately said we want to look at schools in Clark County. Now, it was a national issue, too, because of the Kerner Report, and things were happening all over the country and state. I think then we went to the national convention that year or the year before. I can't remember quite the sequence. I believe it was in Chicago.

The first national convention I went to was in Denver. I will never forget that. I mean, here I was as the new local League President. I was very inexperienced in running an organization. I *really* was. I had the enthusiasm, and I had the commitment, but I did not have the skills and knowledge. So I went to this national meeting, and there were several of us from Nevada. There were several thousand delegates, ninety-nine percent lily white women like me—housewives who were looking for something else to do besides being housewives and mothers. We were lodged in a big fancy hotel, and there were wonderful speakers and break-out groups. Oh, it was incredible! Here I saw people like me from all over the United States, you know. It was just something.

I would see that National Board function, and they would get up to the microphone and make their reports and all that, and I would say, "How could anyone do that? How could anyone ever do that?" I was just absolutely floored and knew that I could never do that.

*Get up and give a speech? Because I was going to ask what was happening with the speech thing during all this time.*

Well, I was avoiding getting up and giving speeches. I could do the one-on-one. I could talk on the telephone to people, but I still had much trouble. I could not get up and do the public kind of stuff, and to watch these women in a room of thousands, I was just *petrified* at the idea. Well, I was appalled that they could.

There were microphones in the aisles. At times they would have roll calls or there'd be time for people to speak. At one point, I had to answer the roll call for Nevada, and it was another one of those times when I was just *absolutely* petrified. Sometimes it would come out, and sometimes it wouldn't without some other kinds of sounds first, and I was just scared to death. I just saw all these people around me that I just felt were so much more than I and so much more skilled and so much more everything.

*It sounds like it was exciting and intimidating all at the same.*

It was. It was. I mean, it was just incredible. It was a whole new world. Well, that was the Denver meeting.

The next national meeting that I went to was in Chicago. They alternated. They'd have a convention, I think, every two years, and then in the alternate years they had something called Council when just the state Presidents got together. So I was local League President for two years. Then I was Vice President of the state League. Then I was President of the state League. So from 1965 until 1972, I was an officer in the League.

I could not get involved in partisan politics, which I had no interest in doing, but I moved up sequentially into these

other offices. When I went to Chicago, I was Vice President of the state League and the Kerner Commission Report had come out. We were also looking at things like juvenile delinquency—things that caused us to look at the makeup of the community—and we were aware of racial issues.

A black man, a national leader named Whitney Young, gave the keynote address at the conference. He was so powerful. He was a *very* good speaker. I was familiar with the Kerner Report. It was a topic of conversation at the convention. He basically ended up saying, “So you ladies want to know what you can do?” [laughter] Again, we were ninety-nine percent lily white in this group. He said, “You can go home and talk with your neighbors about white racism. That’s what you need to do.” And so we did.

I don’t know how many of us were there from our League, maybe three or four. I know Maxine Peterson was one of them. We got a tape of his speech, which was just an incredible speech, and we took it home, and we just were so committed to doing something to further the cause of integration. By this time I think there was violence in various parts of the country, the riots and everything, so it was a major element in our society at that point in time.

I was the ringleader of this small group. I could see a plan for having a conversation in Las Vegas around white racism-black power. I think that’s what we called it. We designed a series of workshops on that, and actually, I think it was three sessions in length. One had to come back three times to complete the whole workshop series. We got black people in Las Vegas from the Westside. We had good contacts because we had black people in the League, and we knew some of these people. There had been some dialogue on issues in Clark County going on: there were housing

issues; there were public accommodation issues; there were school issues; there were work issues. I mean, every aspect of life was being tested around the issue of where did the black people belong.

So we organized this. I don’t think we charged anything, but people did need to sign up in advance, and we had a packet of material. We had a lot of different speakers. We had dialogues, and we did it at least twice, the whole series. We had ministers involved. We had teachers involved.

One of the series we did on the Westside, in like the Doolittle Recreation Center, which had been built over there. That was not without some risk. I mean, one just didn’t drive over into the Westside at that point in time. It had been *very* safe in earlier days, but at that point in time, there was really quite a bit of unrest. Las Vegas never really had the riots like other cities did, but there was lots of hostility.

*Do you remember that night, the first time when you went over there?*

Yes, just that we went and we went in groups. Both white people and black people came to the workshop, and it was successful. I mean, it was completed; I don’t know that I can show you real evidence of change as a result of it, but it was an extending of a hand on the part of the white community through us, through the League, to have a conversation and look at what it meant in Las Vegas to try to integrate society.

There was another group called the Solutions Conference. This was kind of a broad-based group getting together around housing and employment and education issues. I can’t remember if the Solution Conference was before or after we did these, but lots of people in the League were involved



in a whole range of activities going on, and a lot of church people and a lot of business people. There was a broad-based group—the NAACP and others; there were other black organizations. Really, there was much dialog going on, so we were only one of a number of things happening. We filed an amicus brief with the court about that same time. It was developed for us by Frank Schreck, whose mother, Jo, was active in the League. He did it pro bono (no charge) and was wonderful to work with.

It was the late sixties, but the school integration thing went on for two or three years before it finally went to the federal judge in San Francisco, who ordered an integration plan to be put into effect: *not* the one that any of us really felt was the best. It required creating sixth-grade centers—taking all of the black schools on the Westside and making them sixth-grade centers—and then bussing children from all over; bussing all of the black kids out to other schools in the district, except sixth-graders; and bussing kindergarten through fifth grade into the black community from all over town. That was the plan that the judge finally ordered. It was followed for many years, and it's just been altered not too long ago. We were happy to urge compliance with it because it was integration, and it could be done any number of ways.

In the meantime, another thing we did during those days is start a little newsletter about integration. We put that out to a mailing list of two or three hundred people for a couple of years, featuring positive examples of school integration happening in other parts of the country. In fact, we brought one Superintendent here, from Berkeley to Las Vegas, who had taken the initiative and gotten school integration going there a very few years before. We brought him to Las Vegas to talk. So we were *very*, very involved in the mix of

everything going on around that for several years.

*And this is an example of how the League of Women Voters first started out studying an issue and then became active in supporting it?*

Right. Right. The process would be to declare the issue to be studied and somewhat establish the parameters. Then to go do research on the facts and issues, obstacles and options, and come out with a publication of some kind called *Facts and Issues* or some definitive statement about the problem and potential answers. Then the League in unit meetings would meet in people's homes. Some were at night for people who worked. Some were during the day for full-time homemakers to have these things presented to our membership and discuss. Sometimes we'd sponsor public meetings and get the larger community to come out. Out of that we eventually arrived at consensus on something. That was a sense of agreement: it was not a vote. It was always controversial in the League how you got to that, and only the people who showed up at the unit meetings really participated.

You didn't send out a letter to everybody who didn't show and say, "What do you think?" They hadn't been privy to the conversation. There was a committee developing this study that was in charge of this, and they would come up with consensus questions. It kind of got to the core of, "What is the answer to this issue?" And those are the ones that we would develop consensus around. Sometimes we wouldn't arrive at consensus on pieces of that. We wouldn't have an answer—there would be no common ground—but most of the time there was. Then that committee would come up with a statement of consensus, a position statement for the League. The board would



then approve that, as an oversight group, and that became the platform on which the League could act. Then it could let the world know it had this position. It could go initiate whatever. It could speak at public hearings.

We could do a lot—like educational workshops—without ever having a position. As long as we weren't advocating one position or another, and we were still in the process of exploring, we could do a million things in the name of study.

*But once you took a position, then you could work in the legal arena?*

Then we could act. We could go to the Legislature. We could go to the county commissioner. We could go to the school board. We could not state a position until we'd been through that process.

*How would you describe your role as President in that whole process? Just explain a little bit of what the day-to-dayness of that might have been like.*

Well, part of it would have been helping recruit the right kind of people to get on the committee, and it would be the basic coordinating role and seeing that it happened. Now, there would be six or seven of these issues going on at the same time, and so I couldn't be involved in all of them. I shouldn't be involved in all of them. Some of them I was a lot more involved in than others, depending on the strength of the leadership that we had, but I was just playing the role of coordinator working with other people.

*Yes. OK. What did you feel like you were learning at that time?*

Oh, everything! I was learning about government, its structure, its process, about the role that citizens could play. I was learning about down-and-dirty politics that go on. I was learning the frustrations of working with volunteers. I would be devastated when people wouldn't do what they said they were going to do sometimes, and we had certain deadlines to meet. I mean, does this sound familiar? Right now, at the Nevada Women's History Project, same old thing; and, you know, on some things you'd have to give up on being involved. It wasn't as easy for me to do that. I have learned to "go with the flow" much more now.

That was my first effort, and I was giving more time than most people were giving, just because of my circumstances and my passion for it, I guess. I had to learn that very few people could do what I was doing. Not that they weren't capable, but their family situation or their home life or their economic situation didn't allow them to be as active. But there were some very committed, active women. There were an incredible number who were as active as I, so we got a *lot* done. I mean, we were moving, and we were a *really* big force in Clark County. We had over 200 members by 1972 and just were *extremely* active.<sup>3</sup>

Robbins Cahill, who became a very, very good friend, and during part of this time was the County Manager for Clark County (his wife, Margaret, became an extremely active member of the League) loved to tell the story of the first time the League took action. We'd gone through this whole process as a provisional league. The first thing we had to do was a study called "*Know Your County*." If we'd been formed as a city league, we'd have had to study the city. This is really wise thinking on the part of the League nationally. So we had to go out and find out what our county government was all about, *all* aspects

of it, and we had to publish a book that educated ourselves and the public. That was started under this other President, but it got completed and printed under my presidency. So, wisely, that forced us to look at all aspects of Clark County government and to have some understanding of the process.

Robbins Cahill, as County Manager, was extremely helpful in writing a letter to all the county heads and saying, "These people are going to come and talk with you. Feel free to respond and be cooperative, et cetera." After that study, we could then adopt an issue to study and take action on it for the first time. So we chose planning and zoning, and Clark County was right in the middle of looking at the idea of doing planning and zoning. I mean, incredible.

The only reason the County did it, is that there was federal money that would be mandated by Congress under something called 702 Planning Grants. So they got a *big* grant, and they hired a big consultant out of California to come and do a Clark County master plan. Well, those guys on the county commission could care less about planning and zoning. I mean, some were wheeling and dealing like you would not believe. Special sanitation districts were being set up. People were making millions off of owning land in the path of certain highways coming in. There was a *lot* of, I would say, corruption going on in local government at that point in time. A lot of it was that the law wasn't real clear; the law allowed you to do it. So it was corruption when you look at it in terms of ethics maybe, but maybe not law.

They were not interested in orderly growth at all, orderly planning. But they got this master plan done, and while these consultants came back—and these were professionals—the League had adopted planning and zoning. So we jumped on that master plan like you

would not believe, and we sponsored public hearings on it, and we just thought it was the most incredible . . . It was. It was *very* good. It laid out the idea that in some places you're going to leave in open space, and you were going to have an orderly plan for highways, and you weren't going to go for strip zoning of all these little commercial establishments. You were going to create shopping centers, and all these principles that were good, good planning.

We felt very strongly about it, so we arrived at a position in support of this master planning process, namely of the plan. Eisner Stewart was the name of the consulting firm. It was a *major* consulting firm in southern California, and they did many, many communities. Simon Eisner was one of the principals. He came up and presented it and, of course, they loved the League, because we were just ready to roll and be supportive of things like that.

A zoning issue came up about a gas station, and there had been a time when a gas station was going in on *every* corner in Las Vegas. There was a proposal for a gas station, and the staff looked at the master plan and came back with the recommendation that "No! It did not fit the master plan." Well, this had never happened. There had never been a master plan. If some guy wanted a gas station on the corner, why, then it happened. The League decided to go testify in support of the planning department's decision to recommend against adoption of this, against approving this request for a gas station.

Robbins Cahill told this story many times, because we were good friends and had dinner together a lot. He knew what was going on with the commissioners, and we showed up and asked to speak, and the commissioners just were nonplussed. I mean, they didn't know what to do, and here we said, "But

your master plan says you shouldn't do this." They were caught and they turned down the zoning request.

Then, Robbins said, in the inner chambers all hell broke loose, and they realized the position they put themselves in by adopting a master plan when they didn't intend to follow it at all. It was going to get in the way of all the wheeling and dealing that was going on. He said that it was just a *benchmark* in local government to see the League, these little ladies, show up and ask to testify, and for the commissioners to just be absolutely *caught* in a position that they didn't want to be caught in. They did what was right. That time. I can't say that it happened much after that. But anyway, that was our shining moment, our entry into the world of politics and lobbying in Clark County.

Then we had people who were tenacious. We had women who loved to go observe the county commissioner meeting. They would sit there day in, day out, watch what was going on, come back and report. We took positions on all kinds of issues then for about five, six, seven, eight years. I mean, the League was a major force in what was going on down there.

*We wanted to talk just a little bit now about some of the family things that were going on while you were becoming very active in the League of Women Voters and working with the Parks Commission. How was that having an impact on your family?*

Well, as I said earlier, the girls were good students. They liked school. We had car pooling and other arrangements. My husband and his mother were available, as was I, to go pick them up and do things with them. They were involved in Scouting, and they were on a swim team. In 1966, they were on a

competitive swim team that met on the other side of town, and we were down in Paradise Valley off of Eastern and Desert Inn Avenue. The swim team was off of Charleston and Upland. I don't know how many miles that would be, eight or nine probably. There were very few ways to get across the freeway and the railroad in those days. The overpasses were being developed, and so the road construction was horrendous. Five days a week I drove them from our home to the swim team for practice and back again right at rush hour. [laughter] They were in that, I think, maybe two years. Carla was in the five-and-under, and Jan was in the six-to-eight category or something. They won their share of medals and things like that, and they enjoyed it, I think.

They had horseback riding lessons at a ranch in Paradise Valley, too, and the family camping was something we did together. We did things at home together. We played cribbage. We had family traditions at holidays, and a lot of that was spent with one set of grandparents or the other.

Well, a couple of interesting things happened the second year we were there. Sam's practice went very well, and it was interesting. A lot of entertainers came: Juliet Prowse was a patient of his, for instance, and a lot of others like Ann-Margret. One of his patients gave him a 21 table as an in-kind, in lieu of money, so we had a 21 table at home, and we had built a family room onto the house that was fifteen by twenty-five feet, so it was a nice large room. We built me a desk, a work area, which could be used for sewing or, eventually, an electric typewriter and telephone, and that was my command post for all this stuff I was doing. Before that, it was in our master bedroom on the sewing machine, where I would pull out the typewriter from under the bed and put it up on the sewing

machine. When we built the family room on, I really had an office.

But the 21 table went in the family room, and the girls learned how to deal. We played cards quite a bit. We always used to laugh that Carla, who was always just really sharp in math, really learned how to deal very quickly, and that she learned how to count saying, "Eight, nine, ten, Jack, Queen, King, Ace." [laughter] That was her counting routine.

*A true Nevada child, right? [laughter]*

That's right. That's right. At the same time, Jan had been over ten pounds when she was born, and she was always taller than anybody else in her class for awhile there. When our friends would come, we'd always say to them about her that she was going to be the tallest show girl on the Strip some day. And lo and behold, she was at one point in time. [laughter]

A really significant thing for Carla is that, somewhere along in there, she really was not very well, and I couldn't figure out what was wrong. She would be having spells where she would just have a bad upset stomach resulting in much nausea. We took her to a pediatrician and some others. This pediatrician basically said that it was in her head, that she was kind of a perfectionist, and that there wasn't anything physically wrong with her. This went on for several months. Seemed like she didn't feel well, and then it would build up to the point where she would throw up, and then it would go away for awhile. We went off on a trip to visit my parents in Missouri, and we had a lot of trouble with this on the trip. I just came home and said to Sam, "We have to rule some things out. There's something wrong."

He took her to the hospital for some tests, and he came back white as a sheet and said that her one kidney had never functioned.

They had identified a congenital kidney defect. The good kidney had been building up and overflowing with poison of some kind, and then making her sick. Then she'd be OK for awhile until it went through the routine again. Within a couple of days, she was into surgery to have a kidney removed. She was about seven or eight maybe. We did it there in Las Vegas at Sunrise Hospital, and everything went OK, but that was a very serious point in time for us. Very frightening. Very frightening. But she recovered from that and has had no problems since. They said she shouldn't get into contact sports, and she has had four children and is living a very active life.

*What was happening with your relationship with the girls? They were in school. You were very busy, but you were home a lot when they were there. Was there any change?*

I was still doing lots of gourmet cooking. I was home almost every night, and we all sat down to dinner table together. That was really important to us. This went on all through high school, and we loved it. There was a time when Jan was into Greek mythology, and we spent the dinner time with her quizzing us all on various gods and goddesses and myths and crazy things she was learning at school. And it was always a time of intellectual stimulation and fun.

I was very busy, very torn between things. I was realizing how much I enjoyed the leadership end of things, realizing that it was hard to do it all and trying to do a good job of it, but really leaning on Sam and his mother to do a lot with the girls. We still did things together, but I was really pulled in a number of directions. The feeling of achievement and productivity and being able to use creative ideas and all of that was just very, very exciting to me.

It was, in a way, an extension of things I'd done in college and everything, but this was on a much grander scale and with much more impact on the community. I was really seeing that individuals could make a difference, and it was so easy to get to know all the right people. In Nevada you got to meet all the key players very quickly.

The League rapidly established a really good reputation for doing its homework, knowing what it was talking about. I mean, those people were afraid of us at some points in time. [laughter] "Those people" meaning local elected officials, appointed officials, who were mainly men at that time. Very few women. I can't think of any in office at that time that we dealt with.

*Yes. And at this point had you read Betty Friedan's The Feminine Mystique?*

No. This was a kind of self-actualization, I guess, of finding real satisfaction in setting out goals with other people and achieving them. It had nothing to do with just being a woman. [laughter] I mean, it probably didn't. The League was the last organization in the country to support the Equal Rights Amendment. The League's issue was good government and getting citizens involved. It was only open to women. It has since opened up to men as well, but it hasn't changed its name. So it is women having an impact on government, but not as feminists. That came *really*, really late. We weren't working on women's issues. We were working on planning and zoning and juvenile delinquency and libraries and open meeting laws, and it wasn't until the seventies, after I was elected to the Legislature, that the League got into the women's movement.

*Some of the conflict that you felt about what you enjoyed doing out in the public and your*

*need to be with your family was just really your own personal sense of trying to balance everything?*

Right. It was. It was. Sam and I had arrived at this accommodation. I mean, we continued to find a great deal in common in our interest in issues. He developed in me a much keener sense of issues in government and intellectual stimulation. He admired my ability to do the things I was doing, so we shared a lot of that together. He was not very patient with the volunteer process, but if I was, that was up to me. I could go off to all those awful meetings, and he'd take care of the kids.

We also liked Las Vegas a lot. We enjoyed the Strip. We would go out to dinner. We loved jazz. We had our favorite lounges. At that time, you could go to almost any lounge and see top name people for a drink, and we did quite a bit of that. He joined the medical society. I then joined the medical wives.

*Was that better than the military wives?*

It was to some degree, but it still had some [laughter] ring of hierarchy and elitism, but it was much more comfortable. I met people I really cared about, Nancy Shepherd, Blanche Zucker, Helene Follmer, Jean Knudson, and a lot of them joined the League, and there was a lot of interacting there. I've remained a member. I was never a really big officer, because once I became active in the League that just consumed my time. Apart from the Park Commission and those things, I was not active in other organizations at all because I just couldn't be.

Sam was part of the founding board of Planned Parenthood in southern Nevada. He felt very strongly that that was a needed thing, so he was on that founding board and stayed for a couple of years. I mentioned his



getting involved with letter writing about the Colorado River. He enjoyed the Sierra Club people. He again didn't want to be on any board to speak of or do committee work. He was just kind of a loner, but he would get involved and do things.

He bought a boat and had the boat at Lake Mead. He had *always* enjoyed the water and sailing. I *never* enjoyed the water and sailing. That became something that he did by himself. The girls went down with him on occasion, but it was a wooden boat, and it took a lot of maintenance. His mother loved to go down with him, and they did that quite a bit, and so he spent quite a bit of time at the lake.

I mentioned earlier Sam's brother, Oscar, getting married in 1958. He ended up back in California with his wife, and they eventually had three children right in stair-steps between ours. They were living in Santa Monica, and so family vacations included them then, and they occasionally came up to visit us. In 1968 they moved to Carson City, where he was Assistant State Librarian and his wife, Frieda, was a teacher. We started having some close relationships with cousins—the kids and their cousins—and we would get together, but that was the extent of a real extended family. My brother was off doing his thing, and I was staying out of it as much as I could, so there was no real big family thing going on there.

In 1966, Sam had the opportunity to go on a square-rigger to Tahiti for like three months. We met this guy who was a teacher, who had bought this boat called the *Carthagenian*. He had bought it in New England, and he got a crew together to sail it around through the Panama Canal to the West Coast. Through that process, he realized he could never manage the boat alone. He actually hired out to have the boat used in a movie—I think the movie "*Hawaii*," actually. So he was able to then get a crew and run the boat for several

months while the boat was used in the movie. Then he was back to: what is he going to do with this boat?

He realized that he couldn't handle it by himself. So he sold it to the Lahaina Restoration Group on the island of Maui, who were going to use it as a museum in the harbor at Lahaina. He needed to get it from the West Coast to Lahaina. This was to be its last big cruise or trip, and he needed a crew for it. It took at least eight people to get the sails up and down and that kind of thing. The square-rigger was big. It seems like it was about 110 feet long, something like that. Cabins down below would sleep quite a few people.

My husband found out about this from the husband of a friend of mine who'd been in the Navy, and they had just loved sailing and everything, so they ended up on this trip. Now, the other guy went with the ship from L.A. Sam realized he couldn't do it that long, so he arranged to fly to the Marquesas Islands, out in the middle of nowhere down there, and meet them at a certain point at the Marquesas. He went sometime in September or October of like 1966, and he was the ship's doctor and part of the crew. They went to Tahiti. They went to Bora Bora. They went to Rangeirora—all over the South Seas. And I would get letters from him when they'd hit port, and eventually they sailed to Hawaii and ended up in Hilo. Well, this was a fabulous experience for him.

The plan was that the girls and I and his mother would fly to Hawaii when he arrived, and we would spend Christmas in Hawaii, but we weren't sure when any of this was going to happen. It was really touch and go, trying to figure out plane reservations around the holidays and everything, but it all worked out. We ended up having to make airline reservations; we just couldn't wait any longer.



The plan was that we would get to Honolulu, and we would call the Coast Guard and say, “Do you know anything about this ship, the *Carthaginian*, because we need to know when it’s coming into port somewhere?” But the day before we left, he called, and they were there. They were in Hilo. We flew over. We got to Hilo. We went on board the square-rigger. It had been out for like five months. He’d been on it about three, and we sailed on it into Lahaina harbor in Maui. The Lahaina Yacht Club came over and brought a whole bunch of boats, and they provided a convoy, or whatever you call that, for this square-rigger as it sailed into its new home.

I hated all of this. I mean, I didn’t like the water. The smell of the boat was horrible. You know, it was awful. [laughter]

*It was because you got seasick, or you just didn’t ever like water?*

Not that. I just have never liked water. I mean, I never learned how to swim well. It’s just something. I like looking at it, but I’m not drawn to it at all. But this was pretty exciting nevertheless. I was willing to put up with all this to be a part of this excitement. The girls had a fabulous time, and Sam’s mother *loved* all this kind of stuff. She was a real adventurer.

We got to Lahaina, and we stayed a few days. Then we developed a game plan. We went back to Kauai where we’d had our honeymoon and we spent about ten days, I think, in Hawaii that Christmas. That was really just a fabulous trip. We stayed at the Moana Hotel in downtown Waikiki, old traditional hotel.

Well, the following year, 1967, Sam took me back to Tahiti. We went to Club Med on Moorea for three weeks, and we flew. While we were at Club Med, we went over to Tahaa

where they had another outpost of huts on stilts in the water, and then to Rangeirora where he had been, which is an atoll in the Tuamotus, and we were there for three days—a very primitive area—then back to Moorea and Papeete. We spent three weeks going to many of the ports that he had been in by boat. We went by air or car, and we just had a *very* fabulous vacation.

Now, before that, I’m remembering that on our tenth wedding anniversary, which was in 1965, we went on a Sierra Club outing during Easter holidays to Hawaii. So we went back (we had not been back since we’d gotten married) and we spent a week camping on three different islands and hiked on Maui from the top of Haleakala down to the sea. That was an eighteen-mile, one-way, one-day trip that I never wanted to do again, but it was an experience. But anyway, we had been back to the islands on that trip, and then the trip to Tahiti. So we really had continued to have an interest in the South Seas.

For Sam and me, our relationship was one of companionship. I mean, it was one of certainly love and sexual intimacy, but there still was no sharing of feelings (the same kind of thing that I described in my own home life) that we kind of brought to the surface and then decided to ignore in our first year of marriage. That continued. We *never* fought. The girls *never* heard us raise our voices at each other. We were silent, because we just hid all that stuff. We did have conflicts of different kinds, but we dealt with them in other ways. We denied them, and we were fairly happy. Well, I mean, I can only speak for myself at this point, but I thought I had an ideal marriage. I was really very lucky. And I was. [laughter]

I was very lucky. We enjoyed so much of the same things, and we liked stimulating

each other mentally, and we did a lot of that with the things I was involved in, and then he would get involved in the medical community. It was a *very* busy time and very happy, I thought, as I was kind of growing into recognizing some of my skills and talents and that they could be useful.

*Yes. This piece about not being able to talk about feelings. Was it beginning to bother you at all during this time, or you're just not really aware?*

No. I do not recall it bothering me during that time. Not until the seventies.

*So it was a busy, happy time. Everybody's growing and it was a wonderful family time, it sounds like.*

Well, it was, although later after they became adults, we were to find out that it was not a happy time for our girls. They really felt left out—neglected considerably during that time.

I felt guilt to some degree, knowing that I was trying to do too much and knowing that I was trying to balance too much and knowing there were times when I should be with the girls when I wasn't and that kind of thing. My rationalization was that it was important to raise them as independent women. I did have that feeling that I wanted them to be self-sufficient, independent. I knew they were smart. They were both attractive. I was very proud of them. They both had talent in a variety of ways. I wanted to cultivate that with them, for them. And so I felt that it was good for them to be making decisions and not having me around. But in retrospect, I think that was some rationalization. I was so drawn to this new world that I found, that it was not possible for me to drop it.

*Yes. And did you have other people to talk to about parenting or to talk to about this issue, about being with the girls versus being out doing what you needed to do, or was it just something you tried to handle alone?*

We did not talk about those things . . . even with the other women in the League, who were experiencing the same thing. We did not talk about those things. We talked about the League and issues and what we were going to do next in terms of action, how we were going to raise money and how we were going to influence certain legislators. We did not talk about our families that much.

That was the decade of the 1960s, from the time that we moved to Nevada through my evolution through volunteer work in the community and our settling into the community, up to the point where I ended up running for office. It wasn't until later that I was to really examine this whole business of who I am as a woman. I was just living this stereotypical life that I had been raised to live, up till this point and through this decade pretty much. But there was the beginning of some realization that I had skills to offer to a given situation, community organizing types of things, and that they weren't always accepted in the groups that I was in. [laughter] One of the reasons was that I was a woman. It began to dawn on me that that might be a factor. The first time I remember that happening was with the Unitarian Fellowship. We had come to town. We thought we would find our religious home there. We did to some extent, but it was very lacking in substance, so we did what we could to try to add some new things.

Sam taught Sunday school and I helped organize religious worship services, which they really had not done before with that

group—they just had kind of intellectual discussions. At one point I think we both ended up on the board, because it was really a very small group that cared about creating a bonafide organization. And I remember going to a board meeting . . . or maybe I was not on the board, but simply presenting some ideas about what we ought to do to make our name in the community or to create a viable group. I remember going home and just feeling really devalued. I knew that what I had offered were good ideas, and by that time Sam and I both had certainly paid our dues to belong to this organization, both financially and with time, so it wasn't like the new kid on the block simply coming in and telling everybody what to do. We'd been there a couple of years at that point. I just felt like, you know, maybe I got the glazed eyes [laughter]: "Oh, my. Here she comes again with some suggestions."

I truly was very disturbed that my ideas were not accepted by that group, because I felt they were on the right track. I truly had the feeling that it was a predominantly male group, and that if the ideas had been offered by a man on the board, they probably would've been accepted. It was just like they were not enthusiastic, even though these were suggestions that got to the heart of making this a viable group, which we all wanted. I felt I was not taken seriously by the men who had positions of leadership at that point in time, by some of them. That was kind of a first in that regard. [laughter]

When I first arrived in town, I had another experience where I was basically rejected by someone to whom I gave some ideas, but I understood why that happened, and I didn't think it was necessarily because I was a woman. But something in the mix of all this other situation, I remember distinctly kind of just sitting in bed and even crying and talking to my husband about how disappointed I was

that my ideas had not been accepted. He was empathetic, but he didn't do anything about it. I mean, what could he do? His nature would be to not take on the leadership on anything like that, but he was supportive, and I felt that I could share that with him. So anyway, we kind of commiserated with each other, and eventually we got out of the group because we really enjoyed hiking on Sundays more than we did fighting over what to do with this group. [laughter]

*Yes. And did he also see that it was about being a woman, or were you able to share that part with him? Do you recall?*

You know, I'm not sure. I don't know that he did. I don't know that I could pinpoint it out loud, but I just was really disappointed that the group didn't take my ideas seriously. So, no, I don't think I said, "And because I'm a woman, I think they did this." I don't think I would have vocalized that at that point. That would have been too, too much. [laughter] I wasn't there yet. But I remember that.

We went through this process of arriving in Las Vegas, and we truly did settle down to make it home. My husband, of course, had a big agenda—to earn a living for the family, which he did. And things went well on that, sufficient that we paid the bills. I kept the books for his business for, I don't know, at least the first two or three years. He brought home the deposit slips: I didn't do the banking, but he brought home all the records that I needed to maintain. We got some kind of medical record system—there were loads of companies out there providing that kind of thing—and I put it all in order, so that we had a profit and loss statement for the month.

*Did it include the billings or just primarily the internal books? Accounting?*

No. Just things I could do at home on our kitchen table or family room table. He had an assistant who was actually the bookkeeper—not bookkeeper but secretarial-receptionist kinds of things. I didn't do mailings, but I took all of that and put it into a medical record system that told us how we were doing. I actually do like working with numbers. I do. I enjoy that, and I felt I was being helpful to his business and saved some money by my doing it. So I got involved.

The first year the kids started to school, there was a bond issue being put up on the ballot for new schools in the district. This would've been like the first year we were there, I think, because I was a teacher's aide. Jan was in first grade—could've been either the first or second year. I had been there long enough to get a feel for the fact that that bond issue really needed to pass, because we were in a growth phase, however minute it was compared to today.

Leland Newcomer was the Superintendent of Schools, and I made an appointment with him. I don't know that I had ever met him before, but I made an appointment with him to offer my help with the bond issue. And you know, I was nobody. I mean, I was the mother of these kids, probably only one of which was in school at that point in time. But in my mind I had this vision of all the things that you had to do with a grass roots community campaign to get a bond issue passed, and I knew that I could be really helpful in organizing.

*How did you know that?*

Well, just from having done it by then through Red Cross, through church—a lot of church activities in San Antonio—through Girl Scouting. This was before the League. The League gave me golden opportunities to show

what I could do, but I knew that I could do it before that. So it was from whatever—college, religious emphasis week; all those things we've talked about. I truly was ready to give him like thirty hours a week and be in charge of that campaign, if he would've wanted me.

I think back and I think, what if I were in his position? I mean, I can just see that right now. Here is this housewife who comes in and who says, "I'm here ready to help." We did have enough of a discussion that it was clear I didn't just want to lick stamps in the office now and then, that I had a more meaningful idea of what it was going to take. What I was doing was offering myself as a free consultant, but I had no credentials. There was no reason for him to take the risk of putting me to work, you know. I mean, it was *dumb*. [laughter] It would've been dumb. He didn't know me from Adam. I didn't even have references. I just knew that I had now settled into Las Vegas. This was my home. My kids were now going to go to school. It was important that we have a good school system, and I would offer some of my help to the school superintendent to see that this bond issue passed, and so I did.

*And what was his reaction?*

Well, it was very nice and I think he put me on a list of volunteers. At some point I think I did something for the bond issue, but he did what anyone rightfully would do—he thanked me and put me on a list somewhere and never knew what he missed. [laughter] So I definitely had this feeling I was capable of doing these things at that point, because I just felt I should go offer to help. Anyway, I look back at that and I laugh.

*And you not only had the skills, but you've talked to me before about your energy, too. You're a person of high energy.*

Oh, I've always, always had high energy. Well, I don't know what that is. [laughter] I don't know what gives one high energy, but that has been a part of me for as long as I can remember.

As we look back at the various levels of activity I've been involved in, things began to heighten in intensity in Las Vegas. We had moved there, settled down and were planning to stay awhile. We moved in more circles, including my husband's professional circles. Now we had school to deal with. We had home life and relatives, although we've never had a big family, so that's not been as big as it certainly has been in many people's lives. Then I moved into the world of community involvement, and so juggling and balancing things started becoming a real major issue way back when.

I wasn't being paid. Well, I did that part-time motivational research thing, which I continued doing for a couple of years in Las Vegas, but on a much smaller scale because I just got really into all of this and realized that was one thing that I could give up—that we had enough money, you know. I wasn't having to go beg for money to do the things I wanted to do financially. Getting the money didn't mean that much, and it just wasn't as high a priority as now identifying with my community. So, I dropped that.

But the juggling of things, of several balls in the air at one time, became a reality, and that has gone on all my life. Now it's only been in the last years, somewhere in the eighties probably when I left office and when I was now my own financial support, that I had to get really more serious about priorities because of the financial end of things. Then I realized it was important to set priorities—that maybe I'd been going in too many directions always.

But I also realized that I liked having lots of balls in the air. I mean, I just had to admit that if I didn't like it, I would've stopped doing it a *long* time ago. I enjoyed those various things to the point that I put up with the challenge of trying to balance them all at the same time. So I gave up on this feeling that I *ought* to somehow not be doing it. There was a long time there when I felt that I'm moving in too many directions, and I'm not doing any of it really well, so I need to drop something, so what should I drop? And being frustrated at all that, and then finally accepting that oh, well, I'm not going to drop too much of it. I *like* doing this. I must like meeting these deadlines and the ebb and flow of crisis, to some extent, and so I just have to learn how to be smarter at it.

*A whole different viewpoint. Just a shift in viewpoint.*

Right. Right. It was. I think that probably would have been in the early eighties when I did that.

Just in a kind of a wrap-up on the sixties. I was heavily into the League: it became a big piece of my life, first as a new member and very quickly moving to President that second year, then to Vice President of the state, then to President of the state.

I really began to learn the frustration of working with volunteers. There were many more highs than lows, but there were lows. [laughter] There were women antagonists who truly did not like the way I did things to some degree—to the point that we got into out-and-out confrontations from time to time. So there were the people who I had trouble with, because we both had energy and were headed in different directions, and we had to figure out ways to resolve that.



*You said you had out-and-out confrontations. Did that change over the years when you met volunteers with energy headed a different direction?*

No. No. No. That's happened to me in the last year in the History Project [Nevada Women's History Project]. That's life, anytime, whether it's in a workplace where you're being paid or a workplace where it's all volunteer: there are differences in styles; there are differences in motives; there are differences. I've always been more task-oriented than people-oriented, and that is not the way you ought to be. [laughter] You ought to have a balance. You ought to have more of balance than I do.

I'm *driven*. Once I get an idea of something that ought to be done, I am driven to see that it's done, and sometimes people's feelings get left along the way. I know that. I've gotten much better at the "thank you" and reward end of making sure the people who work with me know that I care. I really appreciate what they do, the people that I work with back and forth. But if push comes to shove, it's more important to me to get the job done than it is to stop and soothe five people over egos or jealousy or just disagreement. And then, sometimes, I go back and try to pick up the pieces, and sometimes I don't.

I began to learn that whole world of collaboration. I was in a place long enough to start having some sustained work. Before, I'd been just a church volunteer in San Antonio or in my job with the Red Cross. I'd gotten tastes of what that's all about—getting along with people in the workplace—but now in the League, here was a real sustained commitment over eight years. I began to really learn the problems of making an organization like that work.

The League has such high standards on how it ought to operate coming from its

history and its structure, and I *loved* that. I loved a game plan that's been laid out that I can buy. I just want to enthusiastically carry it out, you know. I like structure too much sometimes. I like organization. I like predictability in process.

The other kind of person that really began to frustrate me were the people who didn't follow through on what they said they would do. That age-old reality of volunteerism—that it is not a high priority in most people's lives, and it's something that can give very quickly. I began to have major disappointments in people who said they would do things and then didn't do them, either in a timely manner or in the League manner. [laughter] It was hard work. I began to realize it was very hard work to keep an organization functioning and effective.

*OK. Did you find a solution to that for yourself? People who didn't follow through?*

No. I mean, that's happened all my life. That happened last week. [laughter] Well, the solutions—yes, there are some. I don't know if you call them solutions, but you learn to try to make it really clear when people get involved. You try to match up people and jobs. You try to learn where they're coming from, and you accept that 99 percent of the people are not there for the same reasons you are. That they either get something socially out of it, or they have a particular talent that they want to share on occasion, or they know other people in the group and they want to tag along. I mean, there are a million reasons why people get involved, so you get smarter on recognizing what those are and not putting people in positions, or maybe not urging people to take things that they're not going to carry out because of the nature of who they are and why they got involved.



In the League, I gave it more of my life than I should have, than most people would. At that point in time it met some of my needs, and I loved the opportunity. That's the other thing that came out of this was a great deal of inner excitement of seeing fruition to ideas. I was in a place long enough. Well, the other thing though is that there were other people like me. There were *wonderful* people that had as much vision and certainly as much skill in different areas, so we made a team. All together we made a *fabulous* team, and we turned the League into a force to be reckoned with in southern Nevada for several years. It wasn't just me by any means. I mentioned some of those people earlier, and we've continued to keep in touch through the years.

But just learning what it takes to make a non-profit organization work with a group of women, the overwhelming majority of whom who have been raised like I was—that home is where you should be first; that these other things are little frills; that if you have time to add them in your life are good and OK, if your husband says it's OK, and all of that—that was a big challenge. We were the last of the full-time homemakers, pretty much, because as we got ready to turn things over to the next wave of people, they were going to school to get their master's degrees, or they were feeling like they deserved to be paid for what their skills brought instead of doing volunteer work. The consciousness of the women's movement of the early seventies was right there, all over the country, or they had to go to work to earn money because the two paychecks became imperative to meet the family lifestyle expectation. And so, the women who we hoped would take over the League just dropped in droves. The leadership wasn't there, for all those reasons.

*This was a major impact of the women's movement then, in terms of attitude?*

Yes. Well, the part about wanting to get paid was an impact of, "I am woman. I can earn money for what I do." The economy was the impact of saying, "We need more money to do the things to keep up with the Joneses," which was a lot of it. And then the other—the raising of consciousness, the self-actualization . . . A lot of women had not gone to college, because they had helped their husbands get through college, and now were feeling it's their turn. So going to school was very exciting, going back and getting a degree, or getting a master's if you already had a bachelor's. These were all legitimate. These were happening in the mid-sixties, in the late sixties.

*These were the things that you were seeing when you were working with the League? This whole change starting to happen?*

Right. But on the other hand, we had these women who had incredible skills and who had buried themselves in family and marriage because they felt it was the right thing to do, just as I had. They were hungry for something to do besides change diapers and redecorate the house, and so that was a very positive thing. We were there at a real exciting time.

*Yes. How was that for you to find other people with similar personalities?*

Oh, it was fabulous! Fabulous. We did things and we just made it work.

One way of kind of tying that together would be to say that it was during the sixties and primarily through the work with the League—a little bit with Scouting, a little bit with P.T.A., a little bit with the medical wives—that I began to realize that I was "somebody," that I was an individual of value

and talent, and that I could make things happen if I had the right combination of people and money and time.

But I knew that the “we” is really important. It’s just like I went to Dr. Newcomer as Jean Ford, housewife: “Can I help with the bond issue?” If I had remained an individual housewife, I could have continued to do lots of volunteer things, but it was the power of being with others, men and women. People take a group more seriously than one individual. We had a men’s advisory group that was fabulous, for instance.

One of the things about the League is that we knew—nationally in the handbook and all the rest—that we obviously needed to raise money to function. We tried to keep the dues really low, because it was a kind of a grass roots, democratic organization. We wanted a broad base of people involved. But the League’s answer to money was to go ask for it in the community—the business community, the corporate community, individuals who had money. It was not at all to have garage sales or bake sales or those kinds of things.

*The traditional women’s fund-raisers.*

That’s right. That’s right. The League was important enough that we ought to have a finance drive once a year. We ought to make appointments with the major power brokers in the community and people who had money. We should go tell them what we’re doing—that it was important business, giving citizenship a place to function in the health of our community. For that they should be willing to contribute to our effort. Well, for most of us, the idea of making an appointment with the bank President to go ask for money from Valley Bank was kind of foreign, but we did it. We had people who had enough nerve to do it, and then they were successful to some degree, and

so then they trained others. Some of the men that we connected with, who were husbands of Leaguers, did some training sessions for us.

Also, the League had a lot of provisional things it had to do to be recognized by the national League, and one of them was to have a finance drive and have a budget and raise some money from the community. In preparation for doing that we had a training session, and one of the League husbands was Lloyd Katz. Edith Katz was his wife and she, early on, became a League member. I don’t know if she’d been a League member in another community or not, but he was just fabulous—short, wiry, lots of energy, dynamic man. He ran a group of theaters [cinemas] on Fremont Street downtown; also the Huntridge Theater on Charleston, I believe, and he had some others businesses as well, and was very active in Jewish activities and later on in civil rights activities. They’re just a marvelous couple. But Lloyd was a *true* friend to the League. He came, and we did role playing—like he was the bank President, and we took turns asking him for money. It was terrible! But he was fabulous and gave us the courage to go try it out. And of course, League husbands were a soft—I won’t say a soft touch, but maybe the easiest place to start—like then he pledged maybe \$100 or something, which would’ve been quite a bit of money for somebody to give at that point in time. I’m sure he gave money so we had some success right away, a track record.

*And when you say it was terrible, are you talking about the practice sessions? You were not skilled?*

No. It was foreign to us, the whole idea to do this, but we did.

We became very good at looking at what are our issues. We were looking at planning

and zoning, parks and recreation. Well, there are certain people in the community who cared about that, so we went to them thinking that they would support us. We were going to use the money for things like publications of the work we were doing, so it wasn't to pay anybody any money to do the work. It was to put out our newsletter, those basics that you need to function. It was to even buy an ad in a newspaper, if we wanted to let the public know about a particular workshop we were offering.

That was very educational, the whole business of looking beyond what we could raise as dues: What would we spend the money for, if we had it? When should we hire professional help? We recognized early on that having professional help do the covers of our publications and have some of them even typeset was very important, so that they didn't look like a volunteer committee had just put them out. The power of the word and how it looks on paper is something that you, Vikki, can relate to.

*The image that you're presenting?*

Right. Sometimes we had League members who could give their talents to that, but more often than not we didn't, or we didn't know what they could do at that point, so we needed money to hire somebody. Then we'd get in-kind services given to us, too. But that whole world of brokering—getting the money we needed one way or another and raising it from institutions or individuals or businesses—was something we did in the sixties, and we were very successful at it for a few years there.

When a whole corps of us moved on to other things, we didn't do a good job of having the next wave of people come along behind us.

*In terms of training them?*

Well, some were these reasons we talked about earlier, and some of it was that we didn't let go of the stuff soon enough. We didn't do a good enough job of delegating. We liked doing it ourselves, and then we moved on and there was no one there to pick up.

*OK. So the League changed after your group moved out of it?*

Well, it continued to be effective. It's still there, but it's kind of an ebb and flow of energy based on leadership and everything.

*Yes. OK. One of the things that you said is, the "we" is important; that compared to your meeting with the school Superintendent, you began to see the difference from working with a group.*

The power of a group to effect change. Right, absolutely. Absolutely.

*OK. And that made a big impression on you?*

Oh, yes! Oh, yes, and that was a big recruiting tool. So it just really was a period of great learning of how to function with people: with volunteers; with community leaders; identifying who those leaders were; realizing that we could have access to them. All of that was a very exciting part of the sixties. It was my training ground.

I continued to have trouble with my speech throughout this whole time. I carefully picked and chose when I spoke in public, based on what I thought I could do. I had crutches of various kinds that all people who stutter have to do.

I had no choice but to lead the League's meetings themselves—the annual meeting, the big membership tea. I had to get up and talk, and it was generally in someone's home

over in Rancho Circle—some big fancy home in town, with seventy-five women dressed to the hilt. We all still dressed up and wore hats and did all that kind of stuff. We all went by our husbands' names: it was still that time.

There came a point in that meeting when I had to get up and welcome everybody and give acknowledgments to certain people and introduce the officers, and I was always just in Panic City when that happened. I mean, it was really hard, but I knew I had to do it, and I obviously liked being in the position enough that I was willing to go through that. I began to realize that, you know, it wasn't as bad as I thought it was going to be, that I was able to do it.

*So you were making some progress, even though you were having problems with it?*

Right. Right. That's when I began to realize that if I got lost in what I was doing and could quit thinking about, "What does that word start with?" or "What am I going to do if I fall flat on my face five minutes from now?" that I could do it. [laughter] And I did get lost in what I was doing. I was very excited about what I was doing and saw the benefit of what I was doing, so that all helped, but I had trouble the whole time.

What was happening with my family during this time? I just kind of wanted to summarize that. At this same time, we were doing a lot of things together. We were doing the family camping. We were having fun as a family. We had family dinner almost every night. I mean, regardless of all these other things that we all were doing, all the women had to be home to fix dinner at five or six. Myself included. So, sitting down to family dinner was a tradition, and we did that.

I loved cooking, and I still would spend hours trying recipes out of the gourmet

cookbook and all that. The girls did well in school, and I did some interaction with the schools. But as I got more involved in the League, that became my major area, so I just didn't have time to do P.T.A. and all of that. We were doing a lot of things together.

When my daughters were babies, I loved that phase of their lives. I loved holding them. I breast fed them both for a short time. I really was glad I had them, and I loved the rocking chair and the reading. Oh, I loved the reading clear up through after they could read, but I really couldn't wait for them to grow up. Some people, I think, really want their babies to stay babies forever. I was not one of those people.

The first pair of shoes that Janet had were black and white saddle shoes. She didn't have any shoes until she was close to one. They were little girl's shoes. She never had baby shoes. I was in this phase of making all their clothes, so they wore some traditional baby gown kinds of things, but as soon as they were walking, I was making them little jumpers and not using traditional baby prints. I really did want them to grow up. I wanted them to be companions. I wanted them to do things together. I didn't see that that was as much fun, when they were babies.

Now, in the sixties is when they were now old enough that we could do things together. So, we did. I enjoyed that a lot. The problem is that I also kind of found this world of community that had a need for people like me to get out there to do things. All of a sudden, I was really having to balance these worlds. I just had an overwhelming amount to do. [laughter]

At that point, as I was beginning to find myself, I truly did not give as much time to the family as I did to what I was discovering about me. I can look back and see that, and that continued into the seventies. I really did want the girls to grow up to a point where we could do everything together.

*When you weren't there, how were the children cared for?*

My husband was generally home when they got home from school, because his schedule was such that he could do that. My mother-in-law spent a lot of time at the house. We had friends that we made cooperative arrangements with. I think they rarely were there by themselves.

By the time we were in Las Vegas, I don't recall actually leaving them. Oh, yes, there were babysitters who came to the house, but that would be in the evening, like when we were going out. In fact, one of the babysitters in the neighborhood was actually a show girl in the Blue Bells at the Stardust. Later on we used to laugh about her being a babysitter, and Jan following in her footsteps as a showgirl. And then, some boys of a good friend of mine who lived around the corner were babysitters for the girls at times when we did feel we needed someone in the house, but I don't recall taking them to a day care anywhere in Las Vegas.

Another piece of life at home was that I bought a piano. I loved playing the piano, and with my money as a teacher's aide at the school, I used that to buy a teak, very modern piano, which is right here in my home still. I did it on the monthly payment plan, because I really didn't make very much as a teacher's aide. It was like fourteen or sixteen dollars a month I paid to the music store. That was how I used my money, to buy this piano, and we continued to enjoy the piano. The girls, I think, took some lessons for awhile. They learned enough to play casually a little bit, and I enjoyed playing it. I played for singing, for family dinners.

In the late sixties my mother-in-law, Prudence Moon Ford, really became a part of our family. She always lived in a separate

place, but she didn't drive and she lived right on the International Golf Course. She was within walking distance of my husband's office, so he would go to her house for lunch. For several years, she made him lunch; he would go there, have lunch, take a nap, walk back to his office. The girls had a lot of interaction with her. They could spend the night with her and she became much more a part of our family.





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## THE LEAGUE: LEGISLATIVE SESSION, 1971

*How did you make the decision to run for public office?*

The 1971 legislative session, that's the answer to your question. The evolution that happened to me during that session caused me to run.

At that point I had been elected state President of the League in 1969 for a two-year term. I was Vice President, 1967 to 1969, while Maya Miller was the state President and then I became state President. (I can't remember who was Vice President. It would've been someone from the north.) She went on to be on the national League board for a short time. She had a real difference of opinion with them on some issues and resigned during that year but remained active with us in the League in Nevada.

That is the year that the new legislative building opened. Before that the Legislature had met in the second floor of the capitol. They now had their own building, and it had a major effect upon how the Legislature operated. Every committee had a committee

room. They had to come up with a time when they were going to meet. It was predictable that you could find that committee in that room at a certain time. That had *not* been a part of their operations in the old capitol at all. So now there was lots of public access to the Legislature. I'm sure they quickly had second thoughts about "Why did we ever build this building!"

Part of getting that access was the League of Women Voters, and we had this idea of creating a lobbying observer corps during the session, to observe the Legislature and to be lobbyists. I basically organized that and coordinated it during the session.

So part of what we did was simply watch what they were doing and report it to our members or to people we identified among ourselves, who would then actually do lobbying. At other times, we put out a call for action which was for everybody to write or call their legislators on specific issues that we had a position on.

Part of organizing for that is that I had the opportunity to move to Carson City and live in a League member's house for at least

three months. I talked it over with my family, and it was agreed that I could go do this, and I went up to Carson, I think, at the opening of the session. The League member's name was Esther Nicholson. She had moved there from New Jersey with her husband; they had both been active in New Jersey. He got a job with Nevada state government in the insurance division. He was already retired, but he wanted some kind of part-time job. She had been state President of the League in New Jersey. They were kind of coming to retire, but they didn't—neither one of them. She immediately connected with the League, was quite a force in the League until she died.

That year when they offered me their home, he retired for the second time. [laughter] Emily Greil, who was a League member and lived on a ranch in Washoe Valley (on the opposite side of Washoe Valley from Maya Miller), gave them the opportunity to spend several months in her condo on the island of Maui. They chose to go during those months that the Legislature was going to be in session, and they basically gave me their house. It was at 1701 North Division here in Carson City. I moved in and I set up headquarters—a base of operations for the League for the session.

*When you say you set up headquarters, describe what that was like. Did you have an office in the house, or were you it?*

Well, I had the whole house, and so I used the dining room table [laughter] and the living room. I had started gathering files of resource materials back in day one, so I brought any back-up material that I thought I might need.

There was a League in Carson. There was another League in Reno, and then there was a League in Las Vegas that were

all very strong at that time with a number of members. Then, we had members at large who lived in places like Lamoille and Elko and Tonopah, I believe, a few people who lived in the outlying area. We had been recruiting people to be a part of this lobby observer corps, and ultimately I think we had about forty women from Carson, Reno, Silver City, Carson Valley—within driving distance.

We set up a schedule of any time they had, and we would put them to work. Sometimes, unless they were an active part of a committee and were very knowledgeable on an issue, we had them be observers. So on any given morning, one or more women would show up in the Judiciary Committee room and sit on the back row and have a packet. We made up packets for observers that had the makeup of the Legislature, the things we were interested in that that committee was working on, background material—just, you know, a full packet of information they needed to function or to get educated.

We needed a way to give those packets to them when they arrived in the building. I mean, the house was three miles away or something, and it didn't make sense to have them come by the house. So we arranged with the security guard at the Legislature for us to leave this little box, this file box, on the floor of his office, because there weren't all these fancy resources that you have at the Legislature now. The League members' instructions were to go to that box and get out the observer packet for the Judiciary Committee, or whatever, and it would have its instructions in it. There were others who worked with me in making sure those packets were up-to-date and had all the instructions. There were quite a group of people that were working. Some were working every day, and then others would come in once a week for just that one committee.

The issues that we really cared about that session—a very important one was air pollution. In 1970, we had gotten our first grant from the federal government to put on a project, to manage a project, and that was just like *big, big, big*. It was fairly new in the federal government, at that point, to make grants to non-profit groups or states to carry out projects. It was the beginning of that era. The Air Quality Act included grant money that people could apply for to do citizen education on air pollution.

I think what happened with this is the national League applied for a big chunk of the money and then turned around and had competitions, or invited state leagues to apply for pieces of the money if they wanted to. Somehow, I think that's what happened, but we ended up getting a sizeable grant—at least \$10,000, maybe more. That was a lot of money to us. A *lot* of money. Our job was to put on a Nevada Air Quality Conference, and all of this was coming out of the feds, out of this act in Washington. I think every state was required to have an air quality conference. In our state the League got the contract to put it on.

We had to incorporate government people, industry. You know, we had to put on a conference that encompassed all the key players in the state, and we did. It was a major event for us. I mean, it was big time, and we did it. We did it in Las Vegas sometime in 1970. It was in one place and then people came from all over the state. One of the people that came, that was on the planning committee, was Larry Struve, who at that point was the Civil D.A. for the District Attorney's Office in Reno for Washoe County. That's when I first met Larry. He was just fabulous, and he knew the issue. He was a good team player. He got involved with the League. He felt the League was wonderful. He got a lot of other

people from Reno to come to the conference and that type of thing.

We broadened our horizons. Now we were working very seriously on an issue where we had some money, which gave us some power to get the right people together at the same place at the same time.

*Mention what Larry Struve's position is now.*

Well, Larry has just retired from state government. He later went on to work for the Attorney General's office under several Attorney Generals, I think. In the Bryan administration he became Director of Commerce and most recently was Director of a piece of the Business and Industry Department, but he just retired and is going to be teaching at the university and doing some fun things that he wants to do.

*OK, but you were impressed with him?*

Yes, and we've remained colleagues of common interest ever since, particularly when we were working on the National Issues Forums back in the early nineties.

*OK. This Air Quality Conference was your first?*

It was a major benchmark for the League in terms of proving that we could be taken seriously as a group that could organize a statewide conference, and that people had to come and listen, because we had federal money, you know, backing us. What was to come out of the conference were some of the first parameters as to what ought to go into a statewide air pollution bill that Congress was requiring every state to pass. So it wasn't just like, "Let's get together and have a nice little talk, and then we'll all go home." I mean, there was a real product that was supposed to come

out of this, the beginning of some consensus in our state around an air quality bill. The Air Quality Act mandated that by a certain time every state would have an air quality plan that would be in state law.

It was well organized. There were break-out sessions. There were keynote speakers. We had money to fly national people in to talk. It had a good program—a printed program. It had scribes in all the meetings, so that there was a full account later that one could refer to. Out of it, I'm sure, came some kind of follow-up, even a bill drafting committee, because when we got to the Legislature in 1971 . . . There were legislators there, too. There needed to be a certain number of legislators and local officials. The motor industry was there, and the utilities were there. I mean, they were out protecting their hide like everything.

The League obviously had adopted environmental quality and air quality as one of its issues, and so it now had unit meetings on all of this, and it arrived at consensus on what the League felt an air quality plan for Nevada ought to have in it. So we went to the Legislature with that ready to roll, and we were on the committee that actually then worked on a bill that got drafted at the request of some legislator. I can't remember all that now.

There was an air quality bill introduced that session, and it was hotly debated, and it did finally pass. It didn't look a lot like the League's ideal answer for air quality in this state. [laughter] The League was *always* more idealistic than reality would allow, you know, when you get down to the economics of things.

The bill changed a great deal in the legislative process, but had we not been there, that bill would've been an industry bill. It would've been totally written by the railroads and the power companies and the

trucking industry, all of whom were greatly affected by air quality regulation. There was emission control for vehicles. There were smokestack, power plant emission controls. There were all these sources of air pollution that we all became knowledgeable on as a result of the study and none of whom wanted to be regulated. It was a major, major bill that session.

A big part of what we did was monitor that bill, and we had experts in the League who really knew it up, down, and backwards. One of them was a woman named Daisy Talvitie, who was just incredible. She had moved to Las Vegas and joined the League in the late sixties, and she was one of those incredible people that was very hard to get along with. I mean, if I had trouble getting along with a lot of these people, she had double trouble getting along. She just was a very intense, very rigid person, just very focused and really needed to be stroked a lot for what she did. She let you know that in all kinds of ways. So she was both a blessing and a problem in terms of this housewives' organization. [laughter]

But she was so knowledgeable and just *amazing*, that you just had to welcome her to the fold and put up with the part of her personality that you didn't like. I'm sure there've been a ton of people who've done that with me . . . said, "Well, I like the end result enough that I'm willing to put up with whatever I have to do to work with her." There were a number of others in the League like that, too, and Daisy was one of them. She is still living, I believe, in southern California now. I haven't seen her for a number of years, but I grew to *greatly* respect her.

There was this same process that she went through with the legislators. I mean, they did not want to see her coming. Oh, my! But those for whom she was on their side, those who agreed that we needed air quality control,

they would find a way to work with Daisy because she was just phenomenal. She had the answers to all these technical questions, and she could rattle it off, and she could give you great arguments for this, that and the other. We would fly Daisy up to be at key hearings, and in the meantime she would call and be talking with committee Chairs. She was a *wonderful* lobbyist; she was a pro.

*What do you think the main thing is that you learned from watching her operate and working with her?*

Well, part of it would be research skills. Part of it would be commitment and determination, I guess. Part of the time, you know, the rest of us would do damage control in working with her.

*So when she would irritate somebody, you had to pick up the pieces?*

That's right. We would be there to kind of soothe things over or add a different kind of touch. So again, we made a good team.

Another person who came up very quickly into the same realm was a woman named Jan MacEachern. She lived in Boulder City, and her husband was retired military. Her mother had been a suffragist in 1914, and they had lived all over the world, and she came as a seasoned Leaguer from some other part of the country. Her area of major interest at that point in time was financial, was studying how the state budget got put together, the state debt structure and these things that most of us housewives knew nothing about and could care less. But the League began to realize these were basic things that we needed to know about if we were going to try to impact state government. So we adopted a whole study on financing Nevada state government in order

to know how to lobby to get the money where we wanted it to go.

Jan MacEachern became the author of *Facts and Issues* in that area. Daisy Talvitie became the author of *Facts and Issues* on air quality. Another woman named Ann Zorn, who was the wife of the U.N.L.V. President (Roman Zorn was President for several years during that time) became another environmental expert. I'm not sure what year, but the great thing about Ann is that she was so quiet in her demeanor, she just made a wonderful balance to Daisy and Jan.

*Because Jan was more like Daisy?*

Oh, Jan was battle-axe personified. I mean, she was somewhat garrulous. She just would get in there and punch you if she didn't like what was going on.

*Physically punch you, you're saying?*

Well, almost. [laughter] She got so well acquainted with some of the legislators, like Hal Smith from Henderson and the people from Boulder City. In fact, she ended up becoming a lobbyist for the Boulder City Chamber of Commerce later and she developed a real camaraderie with these people. It was always a distant respect for Daisy from most people. Distant respect was there, but not that they wanted to become personal friends with her.

Jan MacEachern was able to make personal friends with a lot of these legislators and staff people, but she was also *very* outspoken. Oh, I mean, a lot of the League members just really cringed when these women went to bat. [laughter] But Ann Zorn was really genteel, in a nice way, so she made a great balance and she was equally expert in air pollution kinds of things. She went on to become very expert in



the whole wetlands issue and flood control in Clark County, and is still to this day on their flood control board or something like that.

Dorothy Eisenberg was another one who had come to Las Vegas in the mid-sixties. Her first husband had died. She had four daughters and married a man with more daughters, who was a C.P.A., had his own company, and Paul was his name. She went back to school, I believe. She'd never gotten a degree, and she went to school with the idea that maybe she would teach or something. Well, she got involved in the League, and she never left. She was another one that just really looked at the League as a training ground and was *so* solid and so *there* to help. People like Dorothy and Ann, and then a whole ton of other people, and I'm going to leave out a ton. Somewhere, we probably need to do a laundry list of some of them, because there were just, oh, an *incredible* number that were so *good* at what they did. It was the equivalent of having a full-time job in a corporation somewhere, but instead we were doing League work. It was all volunteer and had started in the late sixties, but by 1971 we had this corps of experts who really knew what they were doing and could speak with some authority, and so we were a force to be reckoned with.

*Did you personally speak on different issues and topics, or did you stay in the background and do organizational work?*

As I recall, I would very rarely speak at a committee hearing, because this was the atmosphere in which I could not function. So I was the behind-the-scenes organizer or I would speak with the individuals one-on-one.

At this point in time the corner bar at the Ormsby House was, in fact, where much business went on. When they remodeled the Ormsby, they ruined the whole atmosphere of

what was there before. There still is a corner bar, I think, but it's just not the same. It was a major place to be before and after, twenty-four hours a day. The coffee shop was around in a different part of the hotel. Later on, in my first session as a legislator—well, all my sessions—I lived there at the Ormsby. So that became a real important place.

In 1971, what we learned is that there were all these lobbyists—that we were not alone by any means. In fact, all of these lobbyists that represented things like the utilities, the railroads and trucking industry and the banks. Green Stamps had a major lobbyist in that point in time. You remember Green Stamps?

*I don't. What was that?*

OK. Green Stamps that you got at the market—certain markets. You got a Green Stamp for every so much money you spent at the market for groceries. Then you put them in books, and then you got premiums. There were whole catalogs of things, from appliances to whatever, that you could get with your Green Stamps.

*And there were lobbyists for this?*

Oh, to protect this industry. It was a *huge* industry. Well, Green Stamps was only one kind, but it was in a lot of the major markets around the country. So the Green Stamp lobbyist was to see that Nevada did not outlaw grocery store stamps—that kind of promotion.

There were a sizeable number of lobbyists, *mostly* men (not totally) that had been around forever—their industry, their interest—and they had never had to deal with the general public to speak of at all. There



wasn't any room in the old capitol. Very few people came to the Legislature to see it in action. There wasn't any place for them to sit. The whole era of Common Cause, of reapportionment . . . . (Well, reapportionment. We need to go back and talk about that at some point.) But the whole kind of grass-roots revitalization of citizenry involved in their government was now happening in the early seventies.

*And they had not been accustomed to that prior to this?*

No. No. It was a nice little club. They had their individual connections—relationships with the legislators—and they did their job and that was it. I'm not saying that this was a bunch of *evil* people doing evil things. I'm just saying that the whole issue of petitioning your government has been something that's been there forever, and business and industry has done it forever, in a more organized way than the citizenry themselves, until about the early seventies when it became popular through groups like Common Cause and the League of Women Voters, which was formed to do that very thing—to get the grass roots information, to have an impact on their government.

So in 1971, all of a sudden, all of these new players were at the table, and the old-time lobbyists were fit to be tied. I mean, their nice little arrangement of life in Carson during the legislative session just went out the window. Here were all these *women* who had these issues, and then P.T.A. . . . there were lots of others besides the League, all these other groups, because the new legislative building allowed much greater access. There was room for the public to watch the Legislature in action. That created a whole new wave of openness in government.

The legislators didn't know what to do either. All of a sudden the public was down their necks *every day*, watching them, every move they made. I'm sure for old-timers that was hard to take.

How does all this tie together? Well, as far as the air pollution bill goes, it was a major issue that session. It was *hard* fought. A man named Harry Allen represented Southern Cal-Edison, which had power plants—one down in Laughlin—and had an inter-tie with Nevada Power on the grid and everything. So he very much cared what happened in Nevada with air quality. The lobbyists like Allen did their best to weaken the bill as much as they could to get the minimum amount of regulation. The League and others who worked with the League (because we had had them at this conference, and they knew what was going on) supported the strongest kind of measure possible.

The compromise was a middle-of-the-ground approach to air quality control in Nevada, so it was a very big learning situation on compromise and negotiation. The League was always prone to go into things with the ideal answer for things and to stick to it. You know, don't compromise! And it was really *tough* to learn that incrementalism is the name of the game. [laughter] That it's unrealistic to expect to get your way when all of these interests are there vying for power. And so, we learned a lot.

A juvenile delinquency prevention program was another issue. One of the publications that we had put out was *Children in Trouble*. This was a statewide study, meaning that "we the people" in Reno studied juvenile delinquency there, and people in Carson studied it here, and people in Las Vegas studied it there. Out of it came some consensus and recommendations about juvenile court and how to handle juvenile

delinquents in the state. We didn't have a bill, but we would follow any bills that did affect this and be prepared to give our comments on it.

*OK. I'm holding this right now, and this is an example of the type of publication that you researched and put out. Let's just read through, for example, the table of contents on that, because it looks like a very thorough and interesting document.*

Right. This is a good example of a League study. "*Children in Trouble: A Look at Problems of Delinquency in Nevada*, prepared by the League of Women Voters of Nevada, October 1970."

Just by way of contrast (I'll come back to this), here is the League's position on Parks and Recreation in Clark County done in April 1967. These are the charts and graphs that we developed for our unit meetings to show what are the developed park lands now, and then we had some national standards which said that every community ought to have so many acres of park land per thousand people, so how many would we need to add? Or do we already have enough based on our population projections for the next twenty years? What kind of park lands? Well, there's neighborhood playgrounds, there's playing fields, there's stadiums, there's all the different kinds—tennis courts, golf courses. This shows you an early League study done on somebody's typewriter at home and run on a mimeograph machine. The pages aren't all the same size. It's put together with a paper clip, and the position we arrived at after months and months of work is simply typed on the front page, whereas *Children in Trouble* three years later has been typeset and designed by someone and has its twenty-five pages. It's just much more impressive in its look and content.

The delinquency study starts with an introduction, national and state statistics giving a national context, a picture of those who become delinquent, Nevada's role in administering services. Then, "Prior to Delinquency"—a discussion of basic causes, various types of preventive measures and information on those pertinent to Nevada. Then "After the Act"—what happens to a juvenile who comes in contact with the system and an emphasis on alternatives to traditional institutionalization. Then, "A Look at the Record"—looking at the policies regarding confidentiality and expungement of records, a look at Nevada law, current practice, and some recommendations for change. The last one's called "*A Generation Going to Pot?*" The drug scene was becoming very much a part of our culture, and so the relationship of juvenile delinquency to marijuana became a specific part of the study—looking at current law, trends in thinking and guidelines for effective drug abuse education. So those are the table of contents, and then the book carries all that out.

Now, it also acknowledges the financial assistance of the Women's Auxiliary to the Clark County Medical Society and the Montgomery Ward Company. There was a business we had gone to and said, "Will you help publish this study?" The Nevada Mental Health Association, the Clark County Committee on Christian Concerns and the United Methodist Church were also sponsors. So we were into coalition building by now, realizing that not only does one organization have more effectiveness than an individual, but lots of organizations coming together around a common issue can be even more powerful with other interested organizations and individuals.

Copies were available through the League offices at 3511 Pueblo Way, Las Vegas—that

was my home—or 227 Hill Street, Reno. They actually had an office up here in Reno, which was donated by a League member—the rent. Single copies could be obtained for thirty-five cents.

Another one (which kind of ties it all together while we're talking about these) is state parks. This one—it has actually two colors on the cover and is called *Current Review of Nevada State Parks*, put out by the League of Women Voters in Nevada. By now we had a logo. This is only four pages, but it was very impressive as a tool we used to summarize something about state parks for our own members and then to use as a public education piece. We looked at “*What Do We Have—Land and Money?*” And then we have “*Bureaucrats in Different Forms of Government Organization*,” and then “*What Are We Planning?*”

We were in on the ground floor of looking at the state park system. It had been formed in the thirties but it had had no money appropriated for it, hardly ever. There just was no money to run state parks at all, and so, “*Needs and Priorities Coordination: Where Do We Go From Here?*” The whole issue of Tahoe and Red Rock were the two that had gotten us involved. And then “*Other State Parks*,” and then “*What is Needed?*” Well, there's financing; there's leadership; there's more study. What are other states doing about this? Well, they're going to bonds. They're having bond issues to pay for it, and they're going to user fees. All of this is summarized in this four-page booklet. On the back is “*Following a two-year study of the Nevada State Parks System, the League of Women Voters of Nevada arrived at the following position: Support of a well-rounded state park system of high quality, adequately financed, coordinated with other land agencies operating in this field.*” So that became our one-liner mission statement of our position.

We could then lobby for money, for changes in the law, for coordination with BLM and the Fish and Wildlife, and all that. That umbrella allowed us to move in a lot of directions for a number of years. Of course, then we'd have to add more study as we got more deeply into it, but these are all examples of a good League study.

There was another one on air quality that I don't have here that was distributed. There were several thousand copies distributed statewide.

Well, both of these I personally had a lot to do with the actually writing of them. We did have a policy (for whatever reason at that point) that individual names were not given any credit on these publications. It all came down to the organization and its power, its image.

*Were these publications—writing them, putting them together—was that something that you enjoyed doing?*

Oh, I loved it. I just loved it. Digging out facts and organizing it in a publication—I liked that a lot, and I liked working with other people and pieces of it.

So those were the major issues. There were a number of others. We had positions on planning and zoning, which we'd arrived at from our earlier study that I told you about with the master plan in Clark County. The national League had positions on several items that we could lobby on if something came up at the state level that was relevant.

We were busy. At least half of the committees that were meeting had something to do with something the League cared about, and so we had observers and lobbyists there throughout the session. We got to know other lobbyists, both the paid ones that represented business and industry for the most part, and

the people representing P.T.A. and mental health, and, you know, all the other little non-profit groups.

A big thing that happened during that session was League Day at the Legislature. Like the first time I went up was at League Day in 1965. Well, here we are six years later, and the building is now big enough that a lot of people can come and enjoy. We took advantage of that and a lot of League members came from all over the state. People like Daisy and Jan would then stay for several days.

We learned that we could talk to a committee Chair and even influence when that bill got put on a hearing, so that our lobbyist could be here to speak on it, and they wouldn't have to make two plane trips. So, we began to learn how to work with the committees—how to use the process to our advantage to be able to be effective.

O'Callaghan was Governor, Mike O'Callaghan, and he basically liked a lot of what the League did. Stories abound of O'Callaghan and his style while he was Governor, but one of them was that he worked real early in the morning. It was not uncommon for him to be in his office at least by 5:00 a.m. and to start actively pursuing his "to-do" list. I was one of those who got a phone call, like at 6:00 a.m. one morning at Esther Nicholson's house, because he wanted to talk with me about a piece of legislation. That just really blew my mind, you know. [laughter] The Governor would call *me* to confer about something.

I'm sure that I had called on him earlier in the session to let him know I was in town for the session. He knew I was the League state President. I can't remember that we had any close association prior to that. He certainly knew the League, but there was no registration of lobbyists or anything at that point. I had made it known to him that I

was in Carson and what my phone number was, and it could've been on any number of issues—the air quality bill, perhaps. Drug legislation was important to us that session, too, and that's when a lot of the first listing of all the classes of drugs—the ones that were legal and the ones that weren't legal—that was a big bill. So, I got my 6:00 a.m. call from Mike O'Callaghan, and that was interesting.

The League got a reputation for being well-prepared on issues, level-headed, knew our way around. I mean, it was just a very big year, and we came into our own, and I felt really good about being part of helping organize that.

There were a lot of women from southern Nevada that came up, too, and would stay several days, and I had other women stay at the house with me on those times. I'd have people in for two or three days, and we would utilize the other bedrooms in the house. We became very aware of the forces at work that didn't like us, which that year was the Nevada Mining Association and the railroad and utilities and the power companies, largely because of the air pollution bill.

Reapportionment was another issue—this was the year they reapportioned after the 1970 federal census. *Very* political. Reapportionment had become a big issue in the sixties throughout the country, with the Supreme Court decision on a Colorado case, *Reynolds v. Sims*—the one-man, one-vote decision—that basically said Legislatures cannot organize based on anything other than on the number of people that they are representing. In Nevada we had seventeen counties, and up to that point every county had one Senator. So Lincoln County, that had maybe a thousand people, got one Senator, and Las Vegas, that had 200,000 people, got one Senator. That could no longer be the rule. Now, both houses of the Legislature had to be based on population.

Nevada had already gotten involved in this issue due to Flora Dungan's filing suit against the state in 1965, I think it was. Flora had been a legislator in the mid-sixties—just a *wonderful*, wonderful person from Clark County, an accountant by training. She had gotten very involved in prison reform, helped create a group called Focus in Southern Nevada, which was a drug prevention or drug treatment program, and was a very independent woman. She was just a wonderful forerunner of those of us who came later. One of the issues that she just couldn't put up with was this whole idea that Nevada was still living in the Dark Ages as far as apportionment of the Legislature was concerned. So, she finally filed suit, and it was *Dungan v. Sawyer*, who was Governor.

That suit forced a special session of the Legislature in 1965, and the Legislature did its first stab at reapportioning. It had not been following the federal interpretation for decades, but in 1965 they didn't have good numbers to work with. This was the middle of a decade, so there wasn't a federal census to work with. I don't think we had a special census. The Legislature was forced into a special session, and they did some initial reapportionment, which shifted a bunch of Assembly seats to Clark County and to Washoe County from the rural areas—and Senate seats as well, I guess—but didn't create districts. It was pretty rough.

In the general election of 1966 in Clark County, there were like seventy-five candidates for the legislative seats down there. I mean, *everybody* came out of the woodwork, and it was one big at-large race to elect maybe X number of representatives to the Assembly, but it was *tons* more than they'd ever had before. Everybody jumped in, and that's when, I believe, people like Dick Bryan and Harry

Reid won, and a lot of others went in on that wave of reapportionment in the mid-sixties.

In 1971 the Legislature had the formal 1970 census, and there were now some court cases all around the country as to how much deviation you could have in a district and yet be legal. You obviously couldn't do it precisely one-man, one-vote, because you had rivers and mountains and town boundaries. You had to deal with county lines. It's *very* complex to create these districts, because it affected every other kind of political boundary then, too, and offices that people ran for. There was a Reapportionment Committee in the 1971 session to deal with all this, and they knew that there was a margin of deviation that courts had now allowed, but beyond which the Legislatures had to go back and start all over again.

There was also the whole issue of what do you do with race; how do you deal with race? Can you create a black district in the ghetto? Is that legal? There were a whole bunch of these issues there. Well, the Legislature dealt with this the whole session, and they came up with a districting plan that, for the first time, called for single-seat districts throughout the whole state for the Assembly. There were now forty-two Assembly people. I think then there were forty equal districts, more or less, with this deviation that was allowable.

*It was no longer based on county lines. It was based on these legislative districts?*

Well, as much as possible, they used county lines, but then within those county lines, they had sub-districts or combined counties in the small population districts. It would be multi-counties in one Assembly district, because the average came out to something like around 18,000 per district that year. To make up 18,000 out in rural Nevada,



you had to go make a big sweep of a bunch of towns.

Well, the Legislature has total power over how you set those lines. So, people talk about gerrymandering, but some of it was purely artificial to make sure certain people got in a certain boundary so they could run again, or their friend could run, or certain people would have to compete with each other. That was all within the power of the Legislature to do.

*And those were all considerations in setting up the districts?*

Absolutely! There were all these political considerations. First, there are the legal considerations. What do you have to do to not get it thrown out by the court? And then you look at it politically. Well, what have we done when we leave the boundaries this way? Well, we've left Joe competing with Stan, and we don't care if Stan loses, so that's fine and this kind of thing. That's a part of life. I mean, that's politics. That's power. Then, there are others that have to do with race and county lines, and there were all these factors. There was a special committee appointed to deal with this, and they did. For the first time, they had a whole staff that did nothing but draw maps. I don't think they used computers too much at this point.

By 1981, I was on this committee and redesigning the reapportionment. I was in the Senate, and I was on the Reapportionment Committee and had a lot to do with the boundaries that were drawn for the eighties. We did have computerized design by then, but I think in the seventies, they did not.

So this was a *huge* issue that 1971 session. When the smoke cleared from the maps, [laughter] *finally*, it was something that they felt was legal and was politically acceptable

to the people who had the most power in the Legislature—certainly not to everybody.

There were many districts in Clark County that had no incumbent, because there'd never been that many seats down there before. I lived in one of those districts. Now, it certainly had not been carved out for me. No way! This was not part of the plan. But we ended up having twenty-two Assembly districts alone from Clark County districts. I don't know how many there were in office at that point in time. Maybe half. At least eleven districts were going to get somebody brand new. That's the way it was in Washoe County, too. Single-seat districts was a new phenomenon, a sub-unit within a county.

Another thing that we learned about the process there was the whole informal power process of the social life that goes on at a legislative session, and we came up ready to do business as the League. I mean, just so naïve, feeling we knew a lot about the issues, which we did—so much so that it scared legislators and others, lobbyists, because we *did* know. Finesse about how to operate? No way. Understanding of the informal side of the process? Very little.

But we began to be aware of this whole social structure that went on—what went on outside the building, all of the major interest groups throwing parties or banquets. Back *then*, they did it. Now, at this last session, I understand nobody went to any parties, because it's now become anathema to throw a party and have the cost of it listed in the paper somewhere, which I think has gone overboard the wrong way. That was never the intent to do away with the socializing and the informal events. It's a very important part of the process.

*Especially when you're trying to reach consensus and coordinate various interests?*



That's right. We learned that it was as important to be a part of *that* as it was to be in the halls during the day. We learned that you didn't have to be asked, at least in some circles. It was OK to simply look at the social calendar in the Chief Clerk's office and go to this party. (Sometimes you had to pay something to get in, because everybody did.) For example, the state employees. We got acquainted with Bob Gagnier and his whole group, and they supported some of our positions on open government and everything. So then, we'd get invited to the things the state employees were doing.

*Tell me his position and what that means.*

State Executive Director of the Nevada State Employees Association. No union in the state, but his group was the equivalent of a political group of state employees organizing for a voice.

The next time around, then I was a candidate, and so I began to get to know all these groups really well, because I was interviewed by them and endorsed by some and not by others. That was just the beginning of the whole political action "PAC" groups, where groups organized to exercise the influence of money on campaigns. There was no PAC registration, so there was no list anywhere, unless somebody was making it for their own good. Everybody . . . the doctors would give a party; the lawyers would give a party; the P.T.A. would give a party; the Mental Health Association would give a party; the railroads would give a party.

Ormsby House had just opened up, so it became the living room and the ballroom for the Legislature. Most of these events were at the Ormsby House in the ballroom. Many of them were very elaborate sit-down dinners. Then, there were informal parties in people's

homes, and there were bars around town that were big enough to have parties. League Day at the Legislature would've been our effort to get visibility.

*But your members—you all began to learn to go to the parties?*

That's right. That you needed to be in on that side of the process, and that's often where you could have your best conversation with the legislator.

*OK. You could actually do your lobbying work there?*

*Absolutely. Absolutely.* And at the corner bar. OK. So that whole world opened up to us of how you mix and mingle and create alignments. [laughter] We spent a lot of time on it. That was my introduction to the process.

I now knew what the League had taught me about how you approach a policy question: you go dig for the facts; and you go look at the trade-offs; and you put together the options; and you try to come out with the right answer; and then you try to educate the public. Well, you first educate yourselves (the League), and then you arrive at a position; and then you take that position to the public. Then you take the position to whoever has the power to make the change: sometimes it's city government; sometimes it's state government; sometimes it's the Congressional delegation; sometimes it's the people. Maybe you take it to a vote.

Regarding the League, it occurred to me when I went back and looked at some of the papers I have, that there was an issue that practically tore the League apart right after the 1971 legislative session. The Legislature ended much earlier than it has in recent years,

so I think it ended by sometime in May. Well, in the spring of that year the League had a general meeting. Some of our members had gone to a National Council meeting back in Washington, and an issue that was coming up in the League was whether or not it should remain non-partisan, or whether it should jump into the political fray in a more active way of actually endorsing candidates and helping them get elected.

That became an issue within our League, and it *really* just was *very* controversial. There were some people who were just tired of having to be non-partisan and of this whole business of the League moving so slow with issues, and thought that it should become a more politically activist kind of group. I was one of those who just felt that would destroy the League, and we had a couple of *really* emotional meetings, where people got up and took both sides or each took her own side. Ultimately, the League *nationally* did *not* make the change. We couldn't have at the state level without the national agreeing to it, so it was something that was of nationwide scope. But our debate at the state level and at the local level was *really* intense.

I really, really felt that the League, after having been at the session in 1971 (and this was a *big* force in my deciding to run), that we had to get people in the Legislature. We had to get people elected, who, in my book, were more committed to learning and studying the issues, who were more "League-like" in their approach and willing to commit more time and were looking at the public interest in a greater way than the majority of legislators that I saw. It *was* important that League members go find those people and get them to run. And, of course, at this point I was thinking about being one of those people.

I realized that League members needed to be moving as individuals, but I felt as an

organization it would destroy the League if it, as a *group*, started being one of those groups that endorsed candidates. And so, I was one with two other women—a woman named Beth Tharel and another one, Ann Zorn, in Las Vegas. We wrote an open letter to the League of Women Voters, which was two pages, single-spaced, of very intense feelings on our part as to why the League should not become partisan. It covered things from the angle of how would we even go about endorsing. Would we screen the candidates? Would they have to pledge support to all the League positions? Or would fifty percent of our positions be enough? I mean, it's just *fraught* with problems. You know, how do you decide who you endorse? We had *lots* of wives of school board members. We had *lots* of wives of politicians in the League. I mean, what would we do about all that inner politics that could take place?

So, let's say the League endorsed a candidate. You know, so what? What really helped a candidate was outright financial support or paid advertising or a large number of workers willing to assist in the campaign. Where were we going to find all that? It was hard enough to find money to run the League. Now, were we going to go raise money? And if we didn't raise money, what did our endorsement count for, particularly? We were just getting ourselves into a lot of muddy water. I felt it would reduce our effectiveness on the issues and color our relationships with *all* the elected and appointed officials.

*Because at that point, the League had a reputation for having balanced, researched opinion, fact papers, objective papers.*

Right. Right. *Objective*. Right, and now our motives for gathering information would be questioned. Their answers might be less

honest if they knew we were going to come back later and decide whether we liked them enough to endorse them. Oh, it was *fraught* with all kinds of problems! Would we continue to be welcome to have our office rent-free in a bank building downtown? The bank would want to look at how our politics was. Did they want to continue to support us? Then, where would our operating monies come from other than member dues and contributions? How many of our present contributors—which was largely the business community—would continue?

I know that many of our positions were not that highly agreed upon by the business community. Well, that could affect those contributions. And then, I really felt it would narrow our membership considerably. We had, at that point, the wives of two university Presidents, others whose husbands were government officials or in sensitive policy-making positions, and many of them could not continue to be active, or even be members, if we left the non-partisanship policy.

The final issue that we talked about in this open letter was that studies on the issues would begin to show the bias of the membership and those with whom its leaders were associated, instead of being objective, and our credibility would diminish. So, with all of that, I felt it would just be *awful*.

Now, what is the answer to making the League more effective? Because that was part of what the League was trying to do—to look at how can we be more effective. And I said, at that point, League leadership should do the one thing we have *never* done enough of, and that is to get our members excited and involved in getting the right kind of people elected to help us carry out our positions; but they would do it as individuals within the Republican Party or the Democratic Party or as Independents, whatever, *not* under the name of the League of

Women Voters. We just had to go urge people to get involved, but to leave the League apart from that partisan political process.

*And this open letter, where did this go to? Did it just stay within the League, or did it go beyond?*

We distributed it, I believe, to general meetings of the League where we debated this issue, both north and south, in Reno and Carson and Las Vegas.

*And ultimately, the decision, though, was made on a national level?*

By delegates coming from all the Leagues all across the country. We never ever voted up or down on something. We did what we call a consensus. Those of us who argued this point won. I mean, there were a few people arguing the other side that were *very* vocal and were key leaders in the League, so they were serious opposition, but the overwhelming majority agreed with us.

When our delegates got to the national convention—and that was the way across the country—the League never did change its policy at that point. Now, I have since *read* the history of the League from the very beginning—1920, when Carrie Chatman Catt first formed the League after women got the vote. There have been *waves* of this argument throughout the history of the League. This was not, by any means, the first time that argument had been raised.

*Yes, and it's always been resolved the same way, up to this point?*

Well, by the members, by the delegates coming together at a national convention. The League has remained non-partisan throughout its history.

*But at the time you were going through it, you didn't have that historical perspective?*

No. I had no idea.

Three years later, there was another issue that the League took up. By that time I was in office, and I was not *actively* involved in the League. This wasn't nearly as big, but the issue of whether *men* should be allowed to join the League came up, and the League's by-laws were changed in 1974 to allow men to join. Now, they still did not change the name, so it's kind of, you know, half there. A man can join the League of Women Voters of the United States, and there are many men who do belong, and there are men in Nevada who belong, even today, and they have been officers of Leagues. I was not directly, personally involved in that and I would've supported that, but I think I would've looked for a name change at the same time.

*So, I wanted to ask you. You said this almost tore the group apart. And I can see that during the discussions, there would've been a lot of tension about that. How did it resolve itself among the members afterwards? Were these tensions kind of left to rest, or did it continue for awhile and pose conflict?*

Well, yes it did. I mean, it built up, and I think then these meetings kind of brought it to a head. I think once the people who were in favor of this change saw they were not gaining a lot of supporters, that they kind of gave up on it.

They must have not been elected delegates to the convention. The delegates to the convention weren't elected by the whole membership— they were chosen by the governing board. So, through that process, I think the board chose people to go who represented the majority point of view, even

though there'd not been an official vote, *per se*. And as I recall, the people who were advocating the change did not quit the League.

There was a healthy argument, but it was *very* emotional, and for the most part, League was never an emotional thing. It wasn't *that* emotional. I just remember, we were all very uncomfortable, because we weren't used to being in a meeting where people were voicing really different points of view and were emotional about it.

*And at that time, was that unusual for women's groups to have to deal with that kind of conflict?*

Yes, yes, yes. It was unusual for women to put themselves in that position, and we weren't used to knowing how to handle it. We were this nice little study group, you know, [laughter] that were reasonable and objective and rational.

I don't want to say that school integration didn't also produce emotion, or even planning and zoning could produce emotion, but for some reason, this issue really did. The people who decided to take the opposite point of view were really vocal and produced some strong feelings.

*But once the discussion was over, there wasn't an underlying current of hidden resentments, or any of that sort of thing that you recall?*

There must have been. I'm sure it didn't overnight move to peace and quiet again. And probably, people decided what they were going to work on next in the light of who they wanted to work with. People made personal decisions about how they were going to continue in the organization that were comfortable for them.

Now, at the same time, one thing that was happening is that Maya Miller, who had

been the state President when I was the Vice President, actually went on to the national board. And this was an *incredible* move. She was head of the human resource issue, around which the welfare issue was one of the major issues; and that's the reason she was willing to do that—is because poor women were always her absolute top priority, and the human resource issue was looking at the issue of welfare.

Well, she and a woman named Molly Gregory Cox, who was also a very strong advocate for poor women and was a more radical thinker than the average League person—very, very liberal, and never came up through the ranks of all the nice little League committees that we formed, but kind of came in from the side and took a position of leadership real quick. She and Maya were of really close minds. They represented us at the National League Council in Washington. They came back and reported, and there was a *big* argument at that council over the welfare issue. Maya became so disillusioned with the League members, who were mainly lily white, meeting in a nice hotel in Washington and in very comfortable surroundings. She felt that they were unwilling to tackle the real issues of poor women to the point that she resigned from the National Board as a result of that meeting. She just could see the League was never going to go far enough to meet her personal concerns about these issues. She'd gotten herself into, you know, an organization that she believed in, but it wasn't going to go far enough with her, on her issue for how she felt, and so she resigned. And she came back to our meeting and talked about that with us, too.

*That was a case where the League was not activist enough for one of its members.*

Exactly. Exactly. At the meeting, the budget committee of the national League

recommended a staff reduction in human resources (which was Maya's item), among other items, at a time when human resources and welfare reform were a number-one national priority. Further, the fact that the May Day demonstrations were going on in the street outside the hotel was a particularly poignant irony. Delegates were disturbed by the contrast between their own plush accommodations and the jail cells so many of the demonstrators and bystanders were occupying. This was in 1971. Maya said, "We knew we had friends in the street . . ." Then with a growing conviction that the League should move from a concern about structure and parliamentary procedure to a commitment on the issue, she wrote her letter of resignation from the National Board.

And you know, for many, many people, the League has never been strong enough in the way it advances its position. However, even though Maya resigned from the National Board, she has *continued* to be a strong supporter of the League throughout her life and is even today very strong. When we were celebrating the seventy-fifth anniversary of the League *nationally* in 1995, we had a reunion at her ranch in Washoe Valley, and it was fabulous. But, I mean, in 1971 she just had to make a personal statement that it wasn't worth her time to try to be the head of a committee at the national level, where they weren't going to go far enough, fast enough.

*I'm thinking that you might want to say something at this point about how women were starting to understand where organizations would help or where they had to make their own stand.*

Exactly.

*It served its purpose. It had a place.*



That's right. But the number of women, I think, that were strong like Maya in their personal convictions and knew that they could make a difference, individually, were really in the minority. The majority were these traditional housewives, and this was a whole new world for them. And *I* was a part of that more conservative majority.

We'll talk later about how scared I was when everybody suggested we invite Gloria Steinem to come and be the keynote speaker at our women's conference in 1977. And I thought, oh, my gosh! What kind of trouble are we getting into, to invite a woman like that? I had this stereotype of her as this radical woman that could only get you in trouble, you know. [laughter]

A product of the League as we finished our interaction with the 1971 Legislature (I ran across the copy of this) was a publication that we put out at the end of the 1971 session called *A Look at the Record*. It's a five-by-eight publication. It has *all* the photographs of the members of the state Senate on the front and the presiding President of the Senate, who that year was Harry Reid as the Lieutenant Governor. On the back are all the pictures of the members of the Assembly with Lawrence Jacobsen as the Speaker. What we did was take the major issues of the session and describe them in a page or two of pretty fine print, and then list how everyone voted. Our attempt was to give the public a more insider's view of selected bills that would show them how the process really works.

I'm looking at one bill here, which was the Local Government Employee Management Relations Act. Well, this was actually a collective bargaining bill—*very* controversial kinds of things going on regarding this—for local and state employees wanting to have collective bargaining and, of course, the state as management not being that *excited* about

that. In this case we talk about five different votes before the bill finally passed. Some of them were on amendments, and then some of them were in one house and then the other house. Every one of these votes was key to how this bill ended up. What was the flavor of the bill at the end? What kind of compromises were arrived at along the way? And so, we give a very detailed description of the progress of this bill, both politically (who was taking sides and why, as much as we could ascertain) and legally (what were the steps that were happening?). We did this on probably twenty-four bills for the whole session, and these would be those that had more of a controversial policy question where people would take positions that would be more liberal or conservative.

The other thing we did was actually give very factual information—a list of the legislators, a list of the committees, a list of how many bills each committee dealt with—so people could begin to see the more powerful committees. Obviously, if State Institutions Committee only dealt with six bills, and Judiciary dealt with 224, then in serving on the Judiciary, you had more power to influence what was going on. We wanted the public, again, to be more aware of this.

The other thing we did that drew just the everlasting ire of the legislators is that we kept attendance records. Now, that's always been kept officially in the journal of the Senate and the Assembly but *never* been published, so we actually had a list of all the legislators and then how many votes they missed on the floor; how many days they were absent on the floor of either the Senate or the Assembly. They could be present in the building, but still absent when certain votes were cast.

Philosophy, as you knew if you were on the inside, was that the committee work was really key. When the committee sent bills to



the floor, there was kind of this courtesy that the larger body, more or less, was to accept the work of the committee, because the larger body didn't have time to examine all of the issues, so you expected the committee to do its work. If it sent the bill, and it recommended a bill be passed, then the legislators were kind of expected to pass it. Now, if the committee killed the bill, it never came to the floor. So committees are really important because, once things came to the floor, often the big fights were over. People didn't feel that strongly if they were on the floor or not, as long as there was the minimum number of people necessary to make the bill pass, which would be a majority in the House (twenty-one out of forty) and like eleven Senators out of twenty. They were a little lax—maybe they'd be off making phone calls to somebody, and they wouldn't be on the floor for a vote. Well, we listed all of that.

We have a list here of all of the members of the Senate. There were 877 roll-call votes in 1971. There was one Senator that did not miss a vote, Senator Mahlon Brown from Las Vegas, who was a really fabulous guy and highly respected by everybody. And then there were people like Senator Coe Swobe from Reno, who missed 242 of those votes out of 877. Senator Titlow—he was from Tonopah—189; Senator Lamb from Las Vegas, 269. Others were kind of in between.

In the Assembly, there were 914 roll call votes over the course of the session. *No one* has a zero [laughter] in the Assembly. Hawkins—that would have been a woman from Hawthorne—missed only nine. I think she's the leader. Then, Smalley from Henderson missed only 16. But then you have Swackhamer from Reno missing 154; White—that was Juanita White from Boulder City—missing 204; Keith Ashworth, the Speaker, missing 203.

We felt they ought to be there more, and we felt it was important for the public to see what was happening to their representation. Well, we were not at *all* popular doing this. But the League did this kind of report for about four sessions, and the next session, you wouldn't *believe* the change in the attendance on the floor of both houses, because they *all* recognized the *political* significance of the public getting a list like this. Even though being there or not being there didn't make a lot of difference on the actual vote, because they were more or less non-controversial, it still was important that they be there *hearing* the debate, knowing what was going on, according to the League. We kind of created a change in the process in that manner.

*You said that you were not popular. Can you recall any specific instances or comments?*

Oh, just lots of grumbling and saying, "You know, this isn't fair, because *you* know that a lot of these votes are non-controversial, and it might be more important that I be talking to a constituent on the phone than being on the floor." But we disagreed with that, and so we went ahead and did it.

We weren't trying to get *at* anyone. We didn't know when we started doing this who was going to come up looking good and looking not so good. We didn't have any individual legislators in mind that we wanted to target. We just wanted to present the facts, and the facts spoke for themselves.

It really did force a change in style on the part of a lot of the legislators, who had *not* felt that it was that important to be on the floor. How legislators performed up there is very important to the public, and their perception is nine-tenths of whatever. School children would come and sit in the gallery, and if a significant number of the seats are empty,

what does that tell them? That people don't care, or they're being lax in their duty. Often, in the general session, you find legislators with their feet on their desk reading the paper during the time that the front desk is going through some of the protocol of reading the fine print in the bills, which also gave a *really* bad impression to school children. So we felt strongly about the image that the Legislature presented to its public, and I did after I was in it, as well.

But anyway, these publications that the League put out were just a little piece of another way of trying to help the public understand the process.

*How was that distributed?*

That's a good question. It cost fifty cents [a copy], so I think that we got money to underwrite the printing, but then we sold it and quantity discounts were available on request. This came out in March of 1972, so it came out a year later than when the Legislature actually met. I'm sure we distributed it to our own members.

We weren't rolling in money, so I doubt if we got anybody to underwrite it, because if we did I think it would have been on here. I think maybe we paid for it by selling it. It doesn't say in here, exactly. But it was a really *excellent* publication, and we got very good response, of course, from the media people—they *loved* it, because here was one-stop-shopping little profiles of legislators and a little diagram of how a bill gets passed, and the workload for the session. It kind of gave a picture of which committees were more important than others, and all that.

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CAMPAIGN FOR ASSEMBLY

Throughout this whole decade I learned that whole thing about process, and now in 1971 I had a *big* dose of the real world, of what it's like to see law being made. By the end of the session, there were people coming to me saying—and all this reapportionment stuff was going on—saying, “Have you thought about moving down a few rows?” (That meant, I've been sitting in the balcony where the public sits, the rows behind the legislators.) “Have you thought about running and becoming one of those who sit in the seats down below?” And I had *not*. I mean, that was the *furthest* from my mind.

*Who would have asked you? Do you remember?*

Senator Carl Dodge. I will never forget the day that he did that. I was still a Republican at this time. I had not been active in the Republican Party. I had no time to be active in the Republican Party, because I was always an officer in the League and, therefore, I was not allowed to do *active* Republican Party work. But it was known that I was Republican.

Carl was a Republican, but I don't think that was a major reason that he spoke to me. He came up to me, and he is just a *jewel*. I mean, I've always respected him a lot, but we've disagreed on a lot of things. He has this *awful* habit of coming up to you and standing about *three* inches from your nose and talking to you. You don't meet too many people like that, but Carl Dodge is one of them, and it's *very* disconcerting. He's just right there in your face. He's not meaning to be intimidating. That's just his style. I can just remember him in the hall saying, “Jean, have you thought about moving down a few rows next session?” You know, it was just amazing.

I said, “Well, not really,” you know, because I had not. I was very honored that he would feel that way—that I might be of the caliber to be a colleague of his. He was in the Senate. He was highly respected on education issues, ethics issues, and taxation, just everything. I don't remember the specific issues we might have dealt with together that session, but he had a lot of respect for the League and for me. He was one of

those: there were others. I can't come up with any other specific names, but I'll always remember Carl.

The other thing is that, as we began to watch all of this going on, it was clear that I knew I could do as well as those I watched, and for most of them, better. I mean, I didn't see any great masterminds at work in this process. [laughter] In fact, I saw some who were self-serving, and some people who just weren't too bright, who just kind of sat there and let somebody else control everything they did, and some who slept through most of it. You know the range.

Nevada Legislature is a citizen Legislature, and it truly does represent the citizenry of this state, from top to bottom. Ideally, to make that work, it really takes some incredible leadership by some people that *want* to make it work as an institution. That's probably one of the most disappointing things that I could say about my experience in the Legislature—that I did not see a critical mass of legislators who wanted to make that happen. There were definitely individuals who were there more for the public good and who had leadership skills and wanted to pull us together as a team. But the overwhelming majority really relished this idea that the Legislature is a struggle for power, and it's every man for himself. (In those days, it was literally almost every man. There were very few women.) That's the way it's supposed to be—you're going to fight for what your district wants, and that's the way it ought to be. Of course, there's got to be compromise and negotiation; regardless, that has to be part of the game. But arriving at what's best for the state as a whole and arriving at a process that allows ideas to be respected and thoroughly digested in the legislative process? No. Very, very little of that did I find *ever* in the Legislature.

*Your vision of what it could be was different than how it was and different from others' actions?*

Oh, so, so different. So different. In the process of being there (that's kind of jumping ahead) I was able to go to a lot of meetings in other states and meet with other legislators, to get acquainted with leaders from other states and do a lot of reading about what's going on in other states. I'm convinced it has happened in other states—that you can have leadership that chooses to lead that body into being a responsible institution to deal with the state's business.

*And you don't think that's happened here, even yet?*

I really do not. There are definitely people who want to see that happen, but the role of special interests, the tilt of the whole country toward individualism versus community, and the role of money has had its impact. A legislator cannot be his or her own person very easily these days, as much as I think we could then.

In 1971 here I was, the absolute idealist, feeling like I knew all the answers to the policy questions in state government—that it just took a good League study, and we'd have the answer in a couple of months. I was learning more about the process, about how things happened, and about the financial end of things—the tax structure and all of that.

*Plus this position was now open, because of the reapportionment.*

Plus, there became a real political opportunity then, and I was ending my term as state President of the League. So it was really very logical, inevitable, that the next step be running for office.

*And yet, when Senator Dodge asked you, you hadn't thought of it at that point? So how did you get there?*

Well, I obviously did somewhere during the session. It certainly wasn't on my mind when I first went. I went to be the League leader, to organize something we'd never organized before—a real force at the Legislature. We did that. I don't know where I was headed, because it's kind of like [laughter], after being Governor, what do you do? After being state President, what do you do? Well, by that time I was more comfortable looking at the options, but I didn't have any aspirations, like to go on and be on the national League board. I didn't look that far ahead. That's not what you did. I had no game plan. I had no career path. I was simply organizing what needed to be organized next, but as the session went on there was a point at which I did start thinking about this: other people started thinking about it. The cast of characters began to fall into place as to what the parties were doing, who was planning to run here and there.

I did talk it over with my husband. We talked about the possibility of my running for office, and he was supportive from the very beginning if that's what I wanted to do. He liked seeing the League succeed the way it did. He was often very helpful on the issues. He was a consultant of types. He, I think, liked seeing me grow in that regard. And I did. I grew in lots of ways—in my confidence in myself and in my ability to function, to organize and work with other people. He was absolutely amazed at that, because he still hated the idea of serving on a committee and working with volunteers somewhere.

We got down to the nitty gritty of what's going to be involved in this, and I ended up meeting with Bob Brown, who at that time

was in an advertising agency called May Advertising in Las Vegas. Jim Joyce was also in that advertising agency. Jim Joyce was working with Senator Cannon and had been on his staff, I believe, back in Washington. David Canter was in that advertising agency, who was then on the school board and also, I believe, was an attorney. May Advertising was a company managed by a man named Jerry May. He had this umbrella under which these incredibly talented men were all functioning under his name as an advertising agency, and he had already had a very strong connection there.

Anyway, Bob and I had connected, and I can't honestly say what led to that. He was a real maverick. He went on to buy and edit the *North Las Vegas Valley Times* for several years, got into all kinds of trouble with Hank Greenspun and the IRS, and ultimately died at a very young age. He was just an incredible man in many ways, but at that point in time, he was a friend. I think he saw in me the potential for being a good legislator and electable and offered to help.

So we sat down to discuss this campaign. Well, he was a pro from way back, even at that point. We knew that my opponent in the Democratic Party was likely to be a man named Dave Brandsness, who was the manager, the administrator, of Sunrise Hospital, which was the major health facility in southern Nevada at that time. He had also managed hospitals in Reno and Elko.

Everybody starts lining up. Again, like in 1966, it was wide open and *tons* of people came out of the woodwork. I cannot remember how many were in our primaries. I was in a district that the majority were Democrats, but it had one of the closer margins than most. Las Vegas was Democratic. I don't know that there were any districts that were majority Republican, but there were three or

four or five that were within reach. So it was doable for a Republican to win. I had maybe six opponents in the primary and Dave had maybe fifteen, but from the beginning we were the big names in the pack, you know. We both had some visibility from past lives.

I met with Bob Brown, and he said, "Well, Dave Brandsness is going to be tough. He's already got O'Callaghan's backing. He's a Democrat. He really wants this in a bad way. He's got all these connections in the health field." I never heard this for a fact, but it was rumored that he already had a seat on Ways and Means lined up, which is what you do if you can swing it. You go out and you talk with your buddies, and you look at the list of who were on the committees last time. There are definitely some seats that are more powerful than others once you get there, some committee assignments. So he knew the system. He was a wheeler and dealer in the state and in Democratic politics to some degree. He had already talked to some friends about, if he got elected, maybe he could get a seat on Ways and Means.

And so here I am. [laughter] Bob said, "You're really going to have to run an active race." We agreed that going door-to-door would be very important and that part I looked forward to. Having a good-looking brochure that was professionally designed would be very important to use in a direct mail before the election, at least once and maybe twice. Doing a map of the district was real important, because nobody knew what district they lived in—it was a whole, brand-new ball game—and where their friends lived and all that. Educating the voter at the same time as to what my district entailed would be another piece that we needed.

I'd probably have to buy some advertising. Yard signs would be *critical* in the district. Advertising—not a *big* deal, because here I

had one twenty-second of the county that was my territory. But yard signs would be just really critical.

He said, "I figure it'll cost about \$8,000 to do the things we're talking about in this race." He was going to get his money out of the commissions on the printing and everything. As I recall, he had some kind of fee, but it was *really* low. He had to ask something because he worked for Jerry May, but he really did want me to win. [laughter] And so, I went home and talked with Sam.

I was eager to organize the campaign. I knew how we were going to go door-to-door. I already knew people that would walk for me, and I had put together a resumé which was actually mimeographed on 82" x 14" paper—no color, no logo, no border, no nothing. I mean, it was just a *raw* resumé of ten years of community activity and a little bit about the family. I was ready to roll, going out to the district. We knew how to get the precinct lists from the Registrar of Voters and all that.

I could *not* ask anybody for any money. It just wasn't in me to go say, "Will you give me, Jean Ford, money to run in a political race." So Sam said, "Don't worry about the money. If it's going to take eight thousand, some way or another, we'll get it." We didn't have eight thousand just sitting in the bank, but we were making a living off of his medical practice. [laughter] I guess he was confident that somewhere along the way, we'd find what we needed.

The really valuable thing that Bob Brown did with me is, we had a really important session where he said, "I've got about six questions I want you to answer, and I want you to go work on them and come back to me when you can answer them."

It was just invaluable. I can't remember the order in which they were, but the first one



was: Why do you want to run? Then, what do you think makes you different from anybody else that could be in the race? What are five issues that you care about that you want to talk about? What are five issues that you don't care about, but you think your district wants you to talk about? Name ten people that will give you a hundred dollars. And there were two or three other questions like that—oh, name people or groups that don't want you to win. So, just the basics—very good campaign strategy analysis kind of thing. [laughter]

I went home and answered those questions. That was just really fabulous in focusing me—centering me on what the task was. I don't know if we did it then, but I believe we did: he also said, "You take this list and give it to five of your best friends and have them answer it." So *they* needed to look at me and say, "Do we think Jean is electable and why? And who would work against her? And what are the important issues? And who might give money?" So I went through that process for, you know, for a little while.

I showed it to him, and we talked about it. He was very pleased with the kind of thing I did with it—the kinds of things I came up with that I thought were why I wanted to run. That ended up becoming the essence of my campaign piece—just good campaign planning.

Then we also talked about the need for photographs. Another person that was *very* supportive of me at this point in time, but was not a part of that ad agency (but I believe she even worked on the campaign) was Joy Hamman. She had been a newspaper woman. No, later on I think she worked on the campaign I lost, but Joy became a friend along the way and had some good political advice for me from time to time.

*OK. I want to just go back to the photos for a minute, because those photos were important on several levels. Tell me the importance of those to you.*

Well, one of the things that we felt we needed to portray was that I had a family—that I wasn't just "Miss League of Women Voters" running around town. And so a family photo seemed to be appropriate. We had several taken, and they were used in the professional brochure and whenever we felt like we needed it. I had children, and the photo would imply that my family supported what I was doing.

I remember Sue Wagner [former Nevada Senator and Lieutenant Governor] talking about when she would go door-to-door, people would say, "And who's going to take care of your children?" I had some of that, too, which I don't think the men ever get asked. But that question was there for a lot of people, even if they didn't ask it, so having my husband in the picture smiling along with smiling daughters and a dog that seemed friendly was all part of the game of presenting me as an electable candidate.

At that point, I think, Bob became really a mentor to me, just a fabulous guy. I'm sure we did talk about the fact that I was a woman. Well, actually some other things happened about that time.

I got a published report from The Center for American Women in Politics at Rutgers University in New Jersey. They had been doing some research. This report from them was called "*The Role of American Women in Politics*." It was a result of research they had done with women legislators in the sixties. This was 1972. They had actually invited X number of legislators together, had a retreat, asked them what it's like to be a woman in politics. What would you do differently in

campaigning? Do you think women are more ethical than men? A whole *ton* of really important questions. This booklet had the consensus of their answers, and I had gotten that through League, probably because there was no Women's Political Caucus at that time.

I was not a part of the women's movement, *per se*—NOW [National Organization for Women] or any of those groups. Some of them hadn't yet been formed, but somehow I was on the list through League, I guess, to get results of this research. So I had this study of women legislators, and that really gave me some confidence to see where I might fit in. I'm sure Bob and I may have looked at that, because it was not that common for a woman to run.

*In the United States. And how common was it in Nevada?*

Well, there had been, up to that point, about forty women that had been elected to the Legislature since 1918, but not very many from Clark County.<sup>4</sup> But we did not feel that my being a woman was a drawback. In fact, we felt it was an advantage—both Bob and I. I never felt that being a woman was a drawback. But one of the things in this book that I remember was the question, I don't know if they used the word "feminist" but, "Did you run as a woman?" Did you run accenting that you were a woman? And they all said no, no, no, no, no, no, no! You will not get elected doing that. You have to prove yourself on the issues. You have to prove yourself as being a competent person to serve in this position, and the fact that you are a woman is *way* down the line.

However, they also said that they did not feel that women were more honest than men. This was another question that was asked—that they felt that they were not any

more ethical or honest, but they had not yet been tested because they had not gotten into positions of power within the Legislatures, which was true. There had been almost no women in leadership positions. Until you are committee chairing, when you can stick a bill in your drawer and never pull it out, or you have the power to decide who is on your committee and who isn't, and whose bill you will hear tomorrow—you do not understand the meaning of power. Women weren't committee Chairs up to that point, hardly at all. So, they were untested. [laughter] And when tested, I think history shows women are as vulnerable as the men. Again, the numbers aren't as great, because the proportion is not as great, but we sadly do not represent another whole wave of the future that has higher standards. No. No.

*But you've said that you and Bob felt that being a woman was an advantage. Can you say why you thought that was an advantage?*

Because it was the beginning of the era of the early seventies and the reapportionment, and the "good old boys" were beginning to be a detriment during the more populist feeling of "grass roots" democracy. We had been through the whole race riot thing. There was a feeling minorities belonged in the Legislature. Women were looked at as minorities. [laughter] Women and minorities belonged there. They couldn't do it any worse than men. There was a turning. The Legislatures throughout the country were getting a lot more visibility through reapportionment, and people did not like what they saw: they saw corruption; they saw personal gain; they saw bad policy in some cases.

A woman was given the benefit of the doubt, unless she really did some things that

turned people off, which could be *running as a woman* [laughter]—acting like she was better than the men, or that she was a feminist, or that she was *only* there to work for women, or even that she came across as kind of a shrill bitch of some kind. Even the best women were vulnerable at that. The way we dressed, the way we talked, the tone of our voice—we realized *all* of that had an impact. If we wanted to be taken seriously as legislators, there were messages we sent by what we wore.

Now, I did not get that as a message for me until I'd been in the session for two terms. I dressed to get attention in those days. Most of it was acceptable, but some of it, I'd go back and look at some of the pictures. Oh, my God! Some of it was on the edge of being inappropriate for what I was doing, but I thought that was what I was supposed to be doing to get attention. My ideas of what was the appropriate dress *really* changed drastically in the seventies—in between my serving in the Assembly and the Senate. Part of that was the whole women's movement coming on and everything.

But anyway, we felt my track record of community service was all to the good, so we went to bat on it on the campaign. We all filed. Brandsness did his thing. All of a sudden there were *tons* of brochures. Throughout the campaign he had billboards. Our district was down near the university. It had quite a bit of open space, and there were billboards in the district or on the edge of it. He had billboards of him walking down a street with his coat slung over his arm, just like those old stereotypes of Congressmen, with this briefcase and everything. I mean, it was just *too* much. This was an Assembly seat for eighteen thousand people. I recall being told he spent over \$30,000 on his campaign. There were yard signs all over the place.

*Yours and his?*

Eventually, but first his. Anyway, he came on *really* strong. Well, we both came on strong in that regard. We were neighbors, actually. Both of us lived on the Stardust Golf Course. I lived on Pueblo Way. Both our streets came into the golf course off of Eastern Avenue, and he was next-door neighbor to one of my best friends, Maxine Peterson, who later became my partner in the tour company. She was really in a hard position, because she had become really good friends with his wife, Val, and with Dave, and they were just personal neighbors and friends. And so, poor Maxine!

The campaign went along, and it became really apparent that he was operating the whole campaign out of Sunrise hospital. We began to get word that the hospital employees were being asked to work in the phone bank, either off-duty or on-duty, I don't know which. The phone bank was in the hospital, and there were campaign operations going on there that hospital employees did as well as other people. He did a *big* mailing, of which the bulk postage meter was Sunrise Hospital. I began to realize that a sign in a yard for Dave Brandsness was a signal for me to go knock on the door, because the signs were there because the people worked at Sunrise, and they had been asked to take them home, many times. There were some other instances of just *blatant* operating out of the hospital.

*Were you able to address that in the campaign? How did you do that?*

Oh, yes, we did. With fear and trembling. [laughter] In the meantime, I had my little three-by-five cards of voters' names. My headquarters was in my family room. We had the precinct lists, and we had all these

volunteers that were going out delivering brochures—this little resumé.

We [candidates] all started getting interviewed by all the political groups—the state employees, the teachers, the labor unions, you name it. We started going through that whole process of being asked to declare what our positions were going to be on things I knew nothing about—that whole world of how do you deal with that? They end up giving money to the people they like, and so I started going through that.

Well, one thing that started happening is the doctors started sending me money. I mean, it was *incredible*. [laughter] I think I got at least two or three thousand dollars from physicians who hated Brandsness, who *really* didn't like him. He was the administrator of this hospital. There was a lot of politics going on in the hospital. My husband was a doctor, a very low-key doctor that everybody respected. He had a *great* reputation in town by then, and so we just started getting checks—\$100, \$250— from individual doctors. A big piece of the money started coming in from individuals. In my announcement letter, I did say, “A campaign costs money.” (I could ask for it on *paper*.) “We appreciate any type of contribution one can give, and here's how you make out the check and send it to my house.” We did start getting money from that.

Well, the primary came and both Dave and I came out *tons* ahead of everybody else in our races, so now we had a race. All these endorsements and things came after the primary. Two of the Democrats, who had run against him in the primary, ended up supporting me. Two other Democrats put their names to a mailer that I put out, that I wrote and paid for, that exposed Brandsness as a special interest candidate of Sunrise Hospital. We did it by getting these guys to put their names on it as Democrats for Ford.

Another candidate in his race, Jeff Silver, went on to be head of the Gaming Control Board for a number of years. He's now a *big*, big attorney in gaming. But he lived in the district, and he was just a little attorney in town and he ran. He endorsed me, which was *unheard* of—for a Democrat to switch over and endorse a Republican or vice versa. But I remember, he put out a statement endorsing me which did not stand him well for quite awhile among the Democrats.

We went door-to-door. I *loved* going door-to-door. I just loved talking with people. Most of the time, I went by myself. I had people walking other precincts and they went in teams. I mean, I walked for months. It was hot. It was horrible! I lost weight. I looked great! [laughter] Running for office and dealing with cancer are the two things that make you lose weight. [laughter] I remember getting really sick from the sun in a mobile home park once, where there just were no trees, no nothing, and having to go back to my car and sit and kind of recover. I think I went home that day and worked on files in the office. But most of the time I was out, day-in and day-out, from late afternoon and all day on weekends.

We learned that you couldn't get into some places. Mobile home parks generally wouldn't let you in—they considered you soliciting. I finally introduced a bill later that required them to let candidates in, which did pass in one of the sessions. So we had to find someone inside the park who would work that park, which we did. Just *lots* of grass roots organizing. We tried coffees. Coffees are a real waste of time. I mean, people love giving them, but the attendance is generally low and it takes up two or three hours, and the people who are there were going to vote for you anyway. Unless you can enlist a lot of help or something, rarely would the coffees be worth their while. But you tried all these things.

We had a lot of campaign notebook kinds of things to use as ideas, so again we just took those and adapted them to our situation. We got to this point at one place where Bob Brown said to me that there had been some polls done and I was losing. One of the reasons that we came up with for that was that my legal name was Imogene and the telephone pollsters were using that in their questioning.

*And is that what you were using for your campaign?*

No, but that's what was on the poll. They had used my name from the Voter Registrar's Office. Now, you can declare the name under which you're going to run in Nevada. I had filed as Jean Ford, but somehow the poll had used Imogene Ford. I felt that that might account for some of it. I felt that I was getting a tremendous response going door-to-door. I felt really good about it.

There were issues that I knew were sensitive. One was abortion, because that was becoming an issue in the Legislature. This was before the Supreme Court decision on *Roe v. Wade*. The League had not taken this on as a study, but it was a political issue. And the conservative people like the Mormon Church wanted to know how you stood on abortion and the other conservatives wanted to know. Catholics wanted to know. I was pro-choice in my mind, but had not been involved in that issue a great deal. My husband had been one of the founders of Planned Parenthood in Las Vegas.

There was an event in my life that really was a very important one that happened during the summer of 1971. After the 1971 session that ended in the spring sometime, I had been approached about running for office, so I had that in my mind. And we had

this argument within the League about how are we going to find good people to run, so I was getting ready to be one of those good people. I think in my mind, I knew I was going to run by the summer of 1971, even though we didn't publicly announce anything until probably February of 1972, because that was more politically correct.

I took my children to my parents in Missouri for a summer vacation, and while I was there, I had this really growing feeling that I was pregnant. By the time I got back home, my period still had not come and I even more so had this feeling that I was pregnant. We had been using birth control—a diaphragm, which had been my method of birth control. Pills were really not an option at that point. Some people were probably taking them, but I don't recall that that had ever been a clear option for me. Anyway, I told my husband that I felt I was pregnant. I said to him, "You know, I really do not think we should have another child." There were a lot of reasons why I felt that at that point, and he basically agreed. We set about finding out what we could do for me to have an abortion, which I ultimately did—actually, pretty quickly. I first went to our family doctor, and it was confirmed that I was pregnant. We talked with him, or I did. He was able to give me the name of contacts in California.

*Was it legal at this point?*

No. It was not legal in Nevada. It was not legal in California, unless you could show that it was going to destroy your mental health—you know, that it was really of major proportions. But there were clinics where you could go. Because Sam was a physician, I think that's one of the reasons that our family physician was willing to work with us the way he did. He gave us a contact number in



California. It was in the summer of 1971—July, early August. I'm not sure of the exact date.

Our daughters were both at home, and we arranged . . . I don't know, whatever we did. They were too old for babysitters (fifteen and thirteen), but we made sure they were OK. We did not tell them about this at this point.

We went together. We flew into, I think, Orange County Airport. We rented a car. We drove to the clinic. I was there probably four hours. My husband stayed the whole time—he was not with me, but he was on the premises. I was given drugs, which was a new experience for me. I had a real high! [laughter] They used the suction method. The people were very competent and caring in what they were doing. It was a M.D. that performed this.

I was taken to a kind of dormitory room until the drugs would wear off, so I was there altogether about four hours. My husband came in and was with me for awhile. We went out to the car. We went to dinner in the Costa Mesa area and flew back that night to Las Vegas.

*Yes. Do you remember the procedure itself, or did the drugs make you not really aware?*

I was not really aware. The decision to do that was always really clear in my mind, and I have *never* regretted it since. I just *knew* that it was not in *my* best interests or the child's for me to have another child. We had two daughters. We were very happy with our children, but they were fifteen and thirteen, and I was off in this other world of growing up as a woman and learning more about myself and what I could do.

My husband and I, we talked about this. Actually, we probably had one very lengthy conversation, but there was *no* argument. I mean, he was totally in agreement if that's

what I wanted to do. I think he too felt that if that's the way I felt, that he didn't have any strong personal feelings other than that.

I did have this feeling that I couldn't let anybody know—that I knew what I was doing was OK with my own principles. If I'd been alone, it would've not been nearly as easy. So I had the best of both worlds in that we had the money to go do what we did and had the access to information, and my husband supported me and went with me, actually. I really know that if things had not worked out to go to California, and if the next step had been to go to Mexico, that we would have done that. I would've spent, you know, as much money as I needed to get to a place where I could do that. That's just how strongly I felt about it. What was hard then was *not* being able to talk about it to anyone, and I felt that I really couldn't—that it was just an issue that people didn't talk about.

*In what way was that difficult? I mean, did you have a need to talk about it?*

No, not necessarily. But I just felt badly that it was something I felt like I had to hide if I wanted to be a public figure, and I was a beginning public figure at that point, through my work with the League and everything. And I felt, again as a potential candidate, just the whole world I was living in, that it was just an issue that wasn't openly discussed. To be able to come right out and admit that I had done this, even though I felt no qualms about it, just would not be the right thing to do at that point in time, in order to meet some of the other goals I had.

Now, it also strengthened in me the feeling that we had to change the law. I was not happy that I had to do it the way I did. And that really showed me what it meant for all these women who had had to make decisions, who



didn't have the access that I had, and for the women that had had difficulties as the result. It strengthened in me a conviction that the law needed to be changed.

*And there was a time in the United States where, at best, you could go to a medical facility, but it was a secret kind of thing to do, and, at worst, it was still the "coat hanger" type of industry that we all hear about.*

That's right. Exactly. Exactly. In the 1973 legislative session, abortion became a big issue, because during that session is when the Supreme Court decision on *Roe v. Wade* was announced. We were only about three weeks into the session when the Supreme Court made that decision.

*And were you ever able to talk about this in the session?*

Not publicly. I did *not* throughout my entire legislative career. I spoke on the abortion issue *passionately* several times, yet I never felt that I could say that I knew what it was like from firsthand experience. It was just an issue that I felt I couldn't tell my own story.

I ultimately did, publicly at an anniversary to celebrate *Roe v. Wade* in Wingfield Park in Reno in the mid-eighties (somewhere in there). I remember being invited to the park by the event organizers and I decided it was time to "go public" with my personal story. In the meantime Nevada law had been changed in 1973. It *had* to be changed, had to be compatible with *Roe v. Wade*, so they had to allow the kind of abortion that I had had. They had to allow it by law.

You know, I honestly cannot remember when we did tell the children, but we did. And my husband's mother knew. Well actually, she knew at the time because I think she knew

where we were going, and it was she who was taking care of the kids. Then within that year, I think that there were a few close friends that I did tell. It just, you know, came out that it was OK to do that.

*What kind of responses did you get from your children, from your mother-in-law, from your friends? Any difference in the responses?*

Not from my mother-in-law. She felt that that was our decision. I don't know that my daughters fully comprehended this event. Things were a lot different then. I mean, fifteen and thirteen year olds, it was not as freewheeling a society as it is today.

*Things like that weren't discussed?*

Right. Things weren't discussed between parents and children, I mean, like we did *not* have a full-blown discussion of all of the if's, and's, and but's. Since then, I've had discussions with my daughters. One of them has four children and would never have considered having an abortion. The other, I think, has a different point of view. We still haven't had big discussions about it. They've each made their personal decisions as they felt. I think they may have felt some concern—wondered what another brother or sister would have been like—but it has not in a *major* way altered our relationship.

*Yes. So the biggest thing then that came out of it was your clearer understanding and compassion for women going through it and that need to get that law changed?*

Right. Right.

The other big issue was school integration, and I had been *very* visible in that. The process

had worked its way around to where the court had actually ordered the plan, and it was going to take effect election day, like school started almost the same day as the vote. Some people really liked to make it look like I was the mother of school integration and forced bussing in Las Vegas.

Those were two issues that I felt I had to deal with carefully, and I tried to figure out a way to talk about them that wouldn't put people off.

But anyway, Bob said, "You know, you're behind in the polls. We are going to have to attack Dave Brandsness." And I'll never forget that day, because just this *big* lump went in the bottom of my stomach. [crying] I can't even talk about it now. I mean, the idea that I was going to have to attack this other person just to win—it just went against everything I had.

I said, "Well, how do we do *that*?" [laughter] I knew that he was *using* the hospital as his campaign team and all that. And I knew him personally. He wasn't a bad guy.

Bob said, "Well, we're going to have to take out some newspaper ads." He actually had come up with a prototype of what he thought we needed to do. It was this same old stuff, you know, this "attack your opponent" thing. I couldn't stand it. I mean, I just couldn't do it. It was innuendo to some degree. It was charges. I said, "Let me take this and think about it."

We both knew some of the things that had been going on. I went home and somehow, in the next few days, I came up with the ad that we did run in the newspaper. I won't say I was totally comfortable with it, but I could defend it and it was powerful. I looked at reality and what we knew about it, and I came up with an idea for an ad that we also used in a handout.

Now, this doesn't have my name on it anywhere. This is the old ploy—that you

get someone else to attack rather than the candidate, particularly for women candidates. When you start *attacking* someone, often you take on the appearance of being really *bitchy*. [laughter] You have to be really careful how you do that—that it doesn't turn people's ideas about you as a person. So for a variety of reasons, I was not eager to *lead* the attack. This was an unknown world for me, this whole thing, but I felt *very* comfortable with what we did end up with.

This is a black and white ad, and it simply says at the top, "Brandsness—The Sunrise Candidate?" It has two columns, one of questions and one of answers. The first column says, "What is Sunrise?" And the answer is, "A private, profit-making hospital in Las Vegas." Then, "Who is David Brandsness?" And the answer is, "Administrator of Sunrise Hospital and Democratic candidate for Assembly 15." Then, "Whose postage meter is being used for political mailings from the candidate to the voters?"—"Sunrise Hospital." "Where is the specially installed campaign headquarters' telephone line?"—"Sunrise Hospital." "Who has been invited to ice cream socials during working hours to talk with Brandsness about his campaign?"—"Sunrise employees." "Who has been assigned to work full-time in the Brandsness campaign?"—"Selected Sunrise employees." And on down the line. "Where were the mailing lists prepared?"—"Sunrise Hospital." "Whose stationery was used to send invitations to a political party at the Brandsness home?"—"Sunrise Hospital." Well, then this ends at the bottom in another question, "Doesn't all this make you wonder if the powerful vested interests who control Sunrise Hospital are behind the Brandsness campaign, and why? The people have a right to know."

So then, it says at the very bottom, "Paid for by Lou Oloff and Floyd Tydlacka,

concerned Democrats for Assembly District 15.” One of these was my next-door neighbor and the other was the husband of a friend, and they were willing to put their names on the ad. This became Democrats talking to Democrats then, with the evidence that this candidate maybe wasn’t all one would want as a representative to the Legislature.

*You brought up an issue—that it was not seemly for a woman to be attacking an opponent in a political campaign. Was it different for men at that time? Were men more able to openly attack an opponent?*

I think it’s hard for both men and women. Almost all campaigns are negative campaigns. That seems to be the *modus operandi*, [laughter] of the nineties anyway. We’ve had *horrible* examples of that in recent years with the Supreme Court races, and all kinds of things. But for a woman, it’s almost like the tone of her voice can change when she’s coming on strongly in opposition to something, and it’s a *personal* attack as opposed to speaking objectively about an issue or the facts. It’s very easy to get into sometimes almost a *whining* tone, but it weakens the strength of the image of the person. Often women tend to be vulnerable to that. However, it’s hard for men to attack and stay above the image of an attacker as well. It’s how you do it. I think it can be done successfully by both men and women through the methods like this. I think it is *always* smarter to let someone else do the attacking than the candidate themselves.

Now, I guess some people could say, “Is that ethical?” [laughter] I felt so. I felt that the word needed to be gotten out that my opponent *was* being funded and staffed by his employer, and he was running for an office for which he was to represent all the people in a certain part of town, not a private

hospital. I definitely felt that I was the better candidate, in terms of representation, and I felt it was important for the voters to know the true nature of his campaign. It was still up to me to let them know that I felt I could be a good candidate for them, but this kind of helped balance the information that was going around.

*Did you get responses on this ad? Did people comment on it?*

Oh, yes. Oh, yes. It was *very* effective. The Brandsness campaign felt it was a very cheap shot, as *all* campaigns would be prone to do. [laughter] Of course, we knew each other. We weren’t good friends, but he was *very* good friends with one of *my* best friends, and I learned that he was not happy with this. Some of his close associates were not happy with it. But it *was* effective, and we printed it for distribution, and it was available to people to get out in the district, in any way they chose, and to their friends.

*Yes. Did it change any of his behavior, in terms of how he was running his campaign that you’re aware of?*

No. No. He was too far into that. This was in the last weeks of the campaign. And that’s another thing—you can’t do something like this *too* late or it may be unbelievable—it may look very staged. There’s always the problem of last-minute smear kinds of things. It would have been hard to have this be believed if it had come out only a couple of days before the election. So it was two or three weeks before the election that this came out—right after the primary.

*So you were learning a lot of things in that first campaign about the how-to, the timing.*

Oh, wow! [laughter] Right. It was a very strong piece, and I think it had a lot to do with turning the tide of giving me an equal opportunity to be considered as a candidate.

So anyway, to make a long story short, election day came. I won by 500 votes in our precinct. We actually knew by about eight o'clock in the evening that I had won. The system was still that they posted the returns on the door of the precinct, and the precincts were primarily in schools. We had runners going around copying down the vote and coming back to the house. We knew how we were doing in all precincts of the district. Then on the news it was announced at eight o'clock that I had won. And 500 votes was a significant margin in that district. Well, there are 18,000 people. I mean, not *nearly* all those voted. It must have been, I don't know, maybe ten-twelve thousand at the most. So I had a 500 margin there. And there were Independent American votes; there were other parties on the ballot as well, and non-partisan. Dave had arranged to have a victory party in his home, right across the golf course. He had brought in televisions from the hospital and put one in every room, and they were all set for this grand party. At eight o'clock I had won. So it was bad news at the Brandsness house. My friend, Maxine, gave me a blow-by-blow of this later.

On the other hand, we had a fabulous party at my house, and all kinds of people came, and then, I made the rounds of the television stations and I was *in*. I was there.

*I just wanted to ask you, because I felt like maybe I cut you off a little bit when you were talking about when Bob Brown said it was time to attack. What was it about that? What brings you to tears, even to this day, thinking about it?*

Well, let's see. It was the feeling that actually attacking an individual wasn't right. I

mean, if that had to be what you had to do to win, that I didn't want to be a part of it. Well, just the idea of being the aggressor or taking the initiative on the campaign scared me, because I had my own little grass roots. I was out going door-to-door, having a good time, meeting all the people in my district. And the fact that it was going to take more than that to win—that I had to move into big time, hard-ball politics, I guess, was very uncomfortable to me. That's what that meant. "We have to attack," meant that I had to take the initiative then, and I wasn't sure what that meant.

Well, when he showed me his idea of what the attack might be, then I was sure I didn't want to be a part of it. I mean, I could not defend that ad. Bob was smarter than that. I don't know why he didn't come up with a better idea, but he didn't at that point in time. Maybe he thought that's what would work, you know, but for me, I *could not* do that. What I came up with was ten times better than what he came up with, and he agreed with that later. It was defensible. Brandsness's position was *indefensible*. And Brandsness got really mad. I mean, he didn't speak to me for several years, because the tide turned with the exposé that this guy wasn't in there to do anything but represent Sunrise Hospital.

*So you really are saying that you learned you could take the initiative, as long as your position was on a solid ground?*

Right. Right. As long as I could have respect for what I was doing—that it was within my value system, accurate, fair, you know. And I did think it was fair. I mean, I knew that I could be a good legislator, and here was this guy out selling everybody a bill of goods that he would be a good legislator. Somehow I felt I'd be better than he would. I now had some evidence that more of the

voters might be voting for him than for me because of the image they'd gotten from his campaign, so let's expose some of what that campaign was doing. If I could do that in a way that we wouldn't get into a "pissing match," OK. [laughter] Accusations back and forth, I couldn't do that, but I could attack with the right kind of facts.

On the 1972 campaign, I remembered an amusing incident that I thought was worth sharing. Well, the whole area of having all these special interest groups come to me and want to know how I felt about issues was something to deal with. This was just the beginning. There weren't really PACs to speak of, in the sense of how they were later organizing, but the most organized at that point were the teachers and the public employees of the state. The A.F.L./C.I.O. had its own organized group at that point.

There were some ultra-conservative groups. One was called Citizens for Better Government, which was a kind of a façade [laughter] for people wanting to know how we felt about six issues—I think they were marijuana, abortion, pornography, capital punishment, and there were a couple of others. They just wanted to know, "Are you in favor of these or not?" Yes. No. You know, those things aren't so simple just to say yes or no, but they had real clear ideas about where they stood on those. Well, all these groups, more or less, put out reports on the candidates' views on their issues, and then eventually endorsed or did not endorse candidates.

This whole business was very . . . well, almost *overwhelming*. In other words, I wasn't allowed to go run my campaign on *my* terms, you know. [laughter] I did put out my material saying here's who I am, here's where I've been, here's what I want to do for you if I get elected. But then all these other groups, that I haven't had any experience with at all,

insist on knowing how I feel about their issues, too, and that's just *really* overwhelming. We had to do some quick research and study on how did I feel.

Often there were oral interviews with panels of people from these groups. I would say, "I would have to know more about this before I could give you an answer." And of course, that can come across as absolutely evading the issue, et cetera. But, I mean, you *can't* know everything about all these issues—particularly the first time you run. So it was pretty overwhelming.

*That's where you got a sense of the scope of all of the issues that you would have to deal with?*

Yes, the job was a little bigger than those League issues that I'd been working on that I felt so confident about. [laughter]

Well, also, the corporate world was getting involved in all of this. I knew I'd really arrived in "the big time" when John Gianotti, who was the lobbyist for Harrah's, called. John called me and wanted to take me to lunch. (I believe this was after the primary, which would make sense. It wouldn't make sense for them to get involved in giving money in the primary races.) After the primary, he took me to lunch. I can't remember where it was—somewhere on the Strip. And he gave me a white envelope with three one-hundred dollar bills in it and said, "You know, Harrah's has looked over the list and has carefully considered the candidates, and we feel you deserve to be supported." Well, they also supported my opponent, Dave Brandsness. I can't remember if they gave him the same amount of money. We probably don't know, because there were no campaign finance reporting requirements at that point in time.

He gave me an envelope with three one-hundred-dollar bills in it, and I had made a



commitment out loud, when I first announced I was running, that I would not accept more than \$250 from any one source. I kind of had this feeling I wanted a broad-based financial support. Even though I was afraid to go ask people for money, I didn't want it all to come from a few large gifts and look like I was beholden to them.

So I looked at John Gianotti, and I said, "I can't accept *all* of this, because I've made the statement that I can only accept \$250."

He looked at me, and he said, "You wouldn't believe how much trouble it's going to be for me to take back that \$50, so just go do something else with it. You don't have to declare it." And of course, there was no law that said I had to do anything. I could do whatever I wanted with it. So I took the \$50 and I gave it to a woman who was running for the school board in Clark County—a black woman who was a good friend of mine. Her name was Bernice Moten. She got elected. She was the first black woman elected to the Clark County School District. She had been a member of the League, was a teacher, and actually taught both my girls at Orr Junior High, but we knew each other from the League and from civil rights activities and everything. I always said that I didn't know how Bill Harrah would have felt about \$50 of his money going to support the first black woman who ran for the Clark County School District, but that's what happened. I doubt that he ever knew. They made corporate decisions to give the money to A, B, and C, and John went out and did it.

*How did you feel about Bill Harrah supporting the first black woman to be on the school district? [laughter]*

Well, that was good. [laughter]

So, that whole area of getting all these questionnaires in the mail and having to respond to all of these questions about things you knew almost nothing about was just a part of the campaign that I became familiar with, and then later, I realized it was an important part that I needed to spend some time on.



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FRESHMAN LEGISLATOR, 1973

The 1973 session was really a growing experience. I looked forward to it. I was *really* excited that I'd won. I really felt confident that I could do a good job. I arranged to live at the Ormsby House in Carson City. Well, this was only the second session in the new Legislature building, and the Ormsby, I think, was a couple of years old. They gave really good deals to the legislators when they moved in for the session, and they had suites at the end of each floor. There were about twelve suites in the hotel that were a combination living room, dressing room, bedroom and bath—like a little efficiency apartment almost—and there was a little refrigerator and a sink. No stove; you could bring a hot plate. Microwaves were not a thing, I think, at that point. So I moved in. I leased one of those suites for the session.

We drove up, because I brought *all* my files. I had them all lined up along next to the bed in the bedroom—all the issues I thought I'd be dealing with and all the League studies we'd done. [laughter] All kinds of stuff.

*Do you remember some of those issues that you went into this session with the expectation that you were going to be dealing with?*

Well, yes. Things like openness in government, the tax structure of the state. Libraries were a personal issue, but we'd done a lot about parks by then—state parks.

The whole family came up, and opening day is always a really “pomp and circumstance” kind of thing, and it opens at noon with a lot of protocol and a script that's handed out to all the legislators and put on their desk. You follow that, and different people are appointed to go call on the Governor and let him know we're ready to go into session and call on the Supreme Court Justice, and all that stuff. There's lots of delays in between while you wait for those things to happen, and everybody visits with family and friends, and the media are there, and you know, it's just a really *big* day.

There we were at my desk. Now, I had no office. There was room on the second and third floors for offices, but there had not yet been

money appropriated to build offices up there, so for my first session, my desk was my office in the Assembly chamber. We did not have telephones at our desks. We had to use the pay phones out in the lobby, as did everyone else. There was a message center, and there were lounges and all of that. The only people who had secretaries were the leadership—the Speaker and the President of the Senate, and maybe the money committees—those legislators had secretaries. But I was in the minority as a Republican, and none of us were committee Chairs or anything. We could draw on a secretarial pool if we wanted to get help with correspondence to constituents and things like that.

Opening day everybody brings their families and they sit right beside them. They bring in extra chairs in between the desks, so we were all packed in there. And so we started through the protocol of the day, and my first sense of doom [laughter] was when they called the roll of the legislators to, in fact, see if we were all there. When they came to my name, I could not speak. This *panic* set in, that I just can feel to this day, of this old issue of my not being able to speak in a prescribed, formal situation—just kind of blew up in my face.

I'm sure there was a pause, and the Speaker or the clerk who was calling the roll called my name again, or something, and I found a way to get some sound out that was acceptable enough that they went on. I just didn't know what to do. I just felt like I was trapped in something that I hadn't expected to happen. It was panic of the worst kind. It was just *awful*. And so I got through the rest of the ceremony. I really don't think I had a speaking part. [laughter] Instead, I was appointed to go call on the Governor, or something I could get up and walk out and do. Later in that session, I had to get up and introduce my family. Now that was something I could do, because

I could do it on my terms more, you know. Certainly, speaking into a microphone was not something I was afraid of at that point.

But having to follow a script was just something that was just awful. And so the day was very exciting, but it also just made me wonder how I was going to cope with what I'd gotten myself into.

*How much of that formal speaking would there be?*

Well, it was every day. I mean, that was what I was in—was one of the most formal situations I could ever have put myself into, where everyday there was protocol. In order to introduce a bill, I had to get up and be recognized by the Speaker and then say, "Mr. Speaker, I move that . . . or, Mr. Speaker, I do X and Y," or whatever.

*So you had to say specific things at specific times in order to have things happen, and that was what you could not do?*

Exactly. Exactly. That's right. And so, I dealt with that every day that I was in the Legislature for four sessions. I was never able to be comfortable with that. I did it when I had to, which meant that I introduced less bills than I would have liked. I found other people to co-sponsor the bills, where *they* would be the ones to get up and make the motion, but I wouldn't be the lead sponsor because the lead sponsor had a lot more speaking to do on the floor.

My husband and family went home that night, I think. They had other things to do. I called Sam later that week, and I just said, "I don't know what I'm going to do." He got Valium for me. He prescribed or he got someone else to prescribe in Carson or something. Anyway, I started taking Valium

like a half hour before we were going to go into general session as a way of relaxing me—whether it was psychological or what. And I came up with all kinds of crutches to make me do what I had to do—I mean, different sounds I'd make with my throat, different ways I would look somewhere else in the room; just whatever I could do to make it work.

Often it was not noticeable to anyone. I mean, I got *good* at that. So for most people, they didn't realize I was going through this agony. The Speaker was Keith Ashworth, and we were never close colleagues, philosophically, but I have to say that he was *so* wonderful to me. I went up to him at one point, because he could tell something was wrong. I can't remember if he approached me, or I approached him, but I just said, "I have this problem, and I don't know what I'm going to do about it." He just said, "What can I do to help?" You know, he was just fabulous. There wasn't a lot he could do to help, [laughter] except that he never made fun of me. He could have *really* destroyed me, you know, if he'd made an issue of it. He had control of the mike and control of who spoke when. He could have put me down in all kinds of ways, and he never, never did. I mean, he was just wonderful to me.

There were some other legislators who knew what I was going through and others who had similar problems. At the party last Saturday night, Bob Craddock got up and said, "You know, Jean and I both had trouble talking, but she got over hers, and I never did." Well, Bob never knew [laughter] that I never got over *that* atmosphere. I was never comfortable with that atmosphere. I *never* could be all I wanted to be as a legislator on the floor.

I never could.

That's when I began to realize that, if I lost myself sufficiently in the issue, I was able

to get up and give fairly good speeches on issues. I would prepare my remarks, never to the point where I had to read them, because I couldn't *read* anything. Then I'd stumble over words. I had to be able to do it spontaneously, but I'd do notes sufficiently that I could do a really good speech on issues that I felt most strongly about, like the abortion issue, or the Equal Rights Amendment, or some of these others. The passion would take over.

And that's when I began to realize that it wasn't a physical thing. It was truly a mental thing. It truly had to do with my feeling like I was not in charge. I was not in control, that I was subservient in this situation— or subordinate would be a better word. That I was a subordinate, and that I was having to meet somebody else's expectations.

I have spoken to a million audiences since then—probably literally. And I *love* speaking in public. I *love* speaking to groups. I still never quite know in a very formal situation whether I'm going to be able to do it easily or not. I have been able to do it easily, and there've been other times when all of a sudden in the middle of something, I realize I'm having trouble, and I know then that my mind has let myself drop into a position where I'm feeling subordinate to the group instead of feeling equal to the group or even in charge of the group. If I psychologically go into a situation saying, "I know what I'm doing, and I think what I have to offer that group is good," I can speak without any problem.

*If you get in that difficult position during a speech, can you change it, too? Can you mentally make that shift?*

I have been able to pull myself out of trouble and into a situation where I've been doing a better job of it, you know. I started learning about it, because all of a sudden I

had put myself in the most untenable position. I did not expect that, because I really had a lot of confidence in myself at that point, I thought. But in reality, a piece of me was still feeling *very* inadequate and *very* subordinate to the system. And, you know, even in this last year, I've had a situation or two. I can't recall exactly the place, but it still comes back. It's still a piece of me that I have to work on all the time.

Throughout eight years, I just had agony trying to function effectively on the floor. Now, it was *never* the same in committee meetings. I was able to ask questions, to speak freely, to question people who were testifying. I chaired subcommittees and hearings all over the state. Whenever I was in charge and it was up to me to make it happen, I could do that. When I was having to answer to somebody else is when I would get in trouble.

So, anyway, that overpowered me at times. Oh, that was just such an awful piece of that first session! Obviously, not to the point that I didn't run for re-election. I figured that, somehow, it was worth going through that for the highs that I got out of it or the good things that I felt I was doing.

*Yes. Did the Valium help you?*

Well, I felt it did. Whether it was psychological or not, I have no idea. However, I quit taking it somewhere during the first session.

A real exciting part of that first session was getting to know Mary Gojack. Mary had been elected the same night I was elected. She was from Reno, I was from Las Vegas. We had actually heard about each other through Colonel Tom Miller, who was Chair of the State Parks Commission. She had never served on the commission, and I had

served with him on the commission. (In fact, I then had to resign after I was elected to the Assembly.) But he knew her as someone who was a real advocate for parks in the Reno area, and she ran on an issue of neighborhood parks and being able to do more about parklands in Washoe County. We met by telephone first. We congratulated each other and knew that we were going to be there, and then we were assigned to sit next to each other on the floor. Of course, she was a Democrat and I was a Republican. From the very beginning we became very good friends. She lived at home and commuted from Reno, but we just got to know each other really well.

Someone really didn't know what they were doing when they did this, because we were assigned to the same three committees. We were on government affairs, elections, and environment that particular session. We caused trouble from the day we both arrived, you know, in terms of the status quo, of how we felt about certain issues. We were much more socially conscious of issues that ought to be dealt with, and our philosophy was much more oriented toward government finding answers to problems instead of leaving them up to chance.

Government Affairs was a very substantial committee—always has been, although there's been realignments of how the committees are organized. But Government Affairs deals with all local, state, and regional basic government issues—the structure of counties, the structure of cities, the charters; all the county laws that govern how they operate. The water law was then a part of government affairs. Oh, it just is an immense area of consideration.

Appointments to those committees are made by the leadership. Since I was a Republican and in the minority, it would've been the minority leader, who was Lawrence Jacobsen that session, who would have finally

given me those assignments. I was given an opportunity to indicate which committees I wanted to serve on, and certainly Government Affairs was my first choice always. Joe Dini was the Chair of that committee. I also remember Hal Smith from Henderson, who was a Republican. Joe, of course, was a Democrat. (The Democrats were in control with Keith Ashworth as Speaker, so all the committee Chairs were Democrats.) Hal Smith had chaired it, I believe, the session before when the Republicans were in control. Now Hal was on the committee, as was Roy Young, who was from Elko, and then Paul May, a Democrat from North Las Vegas. There were others, and then, of course, Mary and I.

From the very beginning, I *loved* that committee, because it fit with my League background just totally. Joe Dini was absolutely fabulous. He treated both of us—well, I think I can speak for Mary—as equals from the day we walked into that room. It didn't matter to him that I was a Republican. He liked that we did our homework. He liked our brand of questioning of people who came before the committee. He liked that we wanted to help work on the bills to make them better; that we were willing to do subcommittee work, work on amendments, and everything.

That relationship continued throughout the four sessions. I must say that Joe was just really a very strong colleague and treated me as a colleague. Not that we didn't disagree on issues and all of that, but I just really will always appreciate the way he treated me as an equal, starting with the very opening days of the session. And Hal Smith, who was a very *strong* leader and later on came back to the Senate after he lost an election in the mid-seventies, also was just extremely good on the issues—someone who was more of a statesman than a politician.

We loved that committee, and we introduced several measures, which didn't pass the full committee that session, like registration of lobbyists and an ethics bill, which were *way* ahead of their time. [laughter] But they received good hearings, and ultimately they did pass later.

One of the things that I really learned that first session is that incrementalism is really the name of the game. [laughter] One *rarely* gets what they want in its entirety, ever, on a measure that you introduce or that you carry for someone else, such as a constituent.

The Legislature is truly a struggle for power. I mean, that's the way it was designed by our founding fathers, that it be a struggle for power. [laughter] And even if it truly represents a diversity of people in the state, you are going to have honest disagreement over the role government should play in our lives—over the role of taxation and what kind of services government ought to be providing. There are honest disagreements on that philosophy, and so when you get there, you realize that you are in a struggle for power. Ultimately, it takes a majority of both houses to pass a bill, and that majority has to agree on *exactly* the same language in both houses, or else it goes to a conference committee. Ultimately, you have to have a compromise. Then the Governor has to agree, because if he vetoes, then it gets sent back for an override.

You began to realize that things like compromise and negotiation are 99 percent of what your job is, and lobbying your colleagues. I came from having been elected in my district. I was twenty feet tall on election night, you know. I had *won*. I was the pick by the majority of my constituents, and yet when I got to the session, I was one of forty. (Now, it's forty-two in the Assembly.) And unless twenty-one of those people agreed with



exactly the same wording, anything I wanted wasn't going anywhere. So I had to get their agreement, and they had to get *mine*. All of a sudden, you *have* to influence others, your colleagues. You have to work within that body with each other to make things happen, so you have to have some priorities.

Another thing I learned early on is that you can't begin to do all the things you want to do, even if you said you were going to do them when you were campaigning. You have assignments. You are all day in this committee work, sometimes dealing with things you have no clue what they are all about. Very boring. Much of it *extremely* boring—reports, testimony that could be much shorter if it were handled more appropriately . . . but that's your assignment: you have to be in committee; you have to listen to those bills. That's your job. The committee system is very important. You can't send everything to the floor and be a "committee of the whole." You'd never *ever* get done. The committee has to do its work.

You begin to realize you have to prioritize greatly your own issues that you're going to try to lead on or to take a position on and make sure it happens—bills you really want to get through, whether you introduce them or not. You can't be working on more than four to six of those during the session, otherwise it's *impossible*. If those bills don't naturally fall in the purview of the committees you're on, it's even harder, because when those bills come up for discussion in another committee, you're off working in your committee. It's just an incredibly complex schedule that you get into if you're doing your job.

*Did your committees match what you wanted to do?*

Government Affairs, *very* definitely. Elections, to some extent, because the League

had been very involved in urging people to vote, and this party system and getting the process for voting. The environment committee was new, and only a few bills were sent there that session.

*And what things did you want to accomplish that didn't match the committees, that you had to work at outside of the committee responsibilities?*

Well, I really didn't have any strong feeling that I had to get twenty bills introduced. I can't remember how many bill draft requests I really made that session. Not a lot, because I had watched that session before, and I knew I wasn't there to pass a lot of bills necessarily. I was there to do the work of being a part of the legislative body.

One thing I learned is that some committees are more equal than others. In fact, some positions are more equal than others. Even if you were in the majority party, you have more power than if you are not, and I was in the minority party that session. The majority party gets to have all the committee Chairs, and there is a great deal of power being a committee Chair. So I began to learn some of the politics of power distribution. Even though we were all elected equally from our districts in the state, we were not by any means all equal when we got there, in terms of power.

*So the new people, in addition, didn't have as much power?*

Well, no, not necessarily. Ordinarily, new people would not chair committees, although depending upon how things worked out, that might be.

I also learned that any bill that has money in it is going to go to the money committees, and the money committee was by *far* the most



powerful. I mean, if you were on the Ways and Means Committee, you just were so much more powerful than anybody else in your house. I wasn't on the money committee, so I had to lobby my colleagues who were there. I had to somehow talk with them, go testify before them. When state parks was a budget item, you know, I couldn't introduce a bill saying I need more money for state parks—that's not the way the system worked. The parks budget came in through the Governor's budget, and the money committee voted on it. I didn't. The budget came to me about the next to the last day of the session, and all the compromises had been worked out.

Now *I* might have an influence on what came out of that budget, but it would be just like anybody else informally lobbying the people on that committee. Of course, the Assembly Committee had to negotiate with the Senate Committee before the budget really came to the floor. They had to agree, so there were all these compromises that had to be made, or all these political decisions. I'm not talking about shenanigans—which also went on—but I'm saying even in the purest of systems, where you had absolutely the most pure of people there to meet the public interest, you would still have a struggle for power, and you would have basic disagreements over where the money should go and how much money should be raised. There would be conflict, and there would *have* to be compromise and negotiation in order to resolve it.

*And it would happen before things got out onto the floor for the vote? A lot of it was settled before that?*

It was agreed that when that budget came to the floor, you didn't touch it—that it had to be voted on, up or down. Well, you wouldn't

think of voting it down, because here was months of work.

Actually, the budget came in about four bills. One was the General Appropriations Bill of state revenues for state government. And then, another would be federal funds that were approved. That was a big guessing game—how much are we going to get from this agency over the next two years? Because we're talking about biennial budgets. That was authorization to spend X-amount of dollars through the feds, assuming it was going to come during that biennium. That was another whole bill—so much for welfare, so much for parks—you know, those that had federal funds in their budgets. There was *another* bill that was only salaries for unclassified employees—political appointees—basic salary for each one of them. They were listed right there, and that was a separate bill. The fourth bill would've been the bill to fund the schools, and that was a formula that was *very* complex and was based on so much per county, based on different factors that went into each county like number of students. They *had* to subsidize the small counties if they were going to get anywhere near equal kinds of education, so there were formulas that spread the money out. That came out in a separate bill.

All of that made up the implementation of the budget, and those on the money committees had 99 percent of the control over what went into those bills. The rest of us lobbied on the side, but you had to get it in during the session. You couldn't start changing that bill when it came to the floor. It just wasn't accepted.

*All of this that you're describing now, you had all of this to learn, or did you have some sense of this before you went there from your work with the League?*

I thought I had a lot of sense of it from having been there for several months in the 1971 session, and I sat in on committees, and I watched. But I only had a *tiny* sense of what it was really like. I learned so much about the system that I didn't know in that first session.

One of those things you don't realize until you're in the system is that the Governor can make you look good and you can have a picture to run in your next campaign brochure, or the Governor can never invite you to the office to a signing and you *don't* have a picture to run in your next campaign brochure. Everybody up there in Carson City, who has different levels of power, can exercise those in a lot of different ways that can help or hinder you politically. I mean, just this subtle thing of whether you're in the picture or not.

*A real study in the use of power and how it's wielded in the state?*

Right. Right. Exactly. Exactly. So power became just a really big topic to think about and to realize that you had to have it. For me it was a *major, major* benchmark when I really realized that. It wasn't until in my second session that I really said to myself, "I'm not going to get what I want for my district, for the people, for whatever, unless I get power, unless I have power." I began to realize that the first session and more into the second session.

My immediate reaction to that was, even in my second session, "My God! What has happened to me? I've been corrupted." In other words, I was still at a point where I felt that to want power was a bad thing. I associated power with coercion, with force, with a negative. That *nice* people didn't use power—it had all negative connotations.

*Did it also have feminist connotations, or the opposite of feminist, in that women didn't have power or shouldn't have power?*

I was *just* beginning to move into that whole realm of thinking. But I really can remember the day that I had this feeling—that I'm just not going to be effective until I get power. And then, this idea, "Gosh, I've been corrupted and here I am in politics." But I immediately, in my own mind said, "No, I know what I want to do with that power, and it's OK to want power. It's OK. The way I want to use it, I'm comfortable with that."

I began to realize that power was a neutral term, that it was OK to go for it, and that was a *big* move for me—a *big* move. I've told that story a million times to groups since when I've done workshops on lobbying, on citizen action, on campaigning, on running for office, because it's just so true. Men and women (and particularly women) were *not* comfortable with the use of power, with the idea that it was OK to go get power.

Since then, I know from all the research and from my own experience, that women are much more willing to share that power and get what they want through having power *with* people than having power *over* people. The research nationally shows that that is a true finding of the role of women in politics. Now, it's not exclusive by any means. I mean, there are a lot of women who have gone for power in the old macho "good old boy" way and relish using it and abusing it, and there are men that know how to use power in the way that I want us to think about using power. But at that point in time, it was just a whole new concept to me. Oh, it was tremendous!

I just realized that, you know, you had to be smarter. You had to figure out how you're going to get that power, and then you had to find other people who wanted to get it with

you, and you just had to go organize in a better way.

*How did you start to get power, then?*

Well, I realized I *have* it already. I realized I already had all these skills and these avenues—that I had it. It was just, how was I going to identify when to use it and where? Where I didn't have it, did I need to go get it, and how would I try to do that? Well, you get on a committee that has control of action on a bill. You cultivate friendships within the Legislature with the people who have the power. You move out with an agenda. The beginning of the dawning of that was in the first session, but it was in my second session in the Assembly that I really learned a lot more about that.

Something else I came across really fits with this discussion about my growing awareness of the nature of power, and how important that became to me, to understand and know how to use power. I found some notes that I had made when I was at a conference one time in Reno, put on by the women in northern Nevada. I'm not sure who—it could have been the League—but it was at St. John's Presbyterian Church, I remember. It was a big, big gathering, and one of the key speakers that day was Maya Miller. This would have been possibly even in the late sixties, because it was one of the few times I ever heard Maya give a formal speech because she was much more low-key. Even though she was very much a leader, she was more inclined to work informally with people and not to give big speeches, but she was on the program talking about power. These notes have been important to me and became a part of my thinking as I gathered information from other sources about power. I thought it was interesting to kind of give her credit, because she impressed me so much.

She talked that day about the fact that one can gain power from a whole range of sources. That includes personal leadership. It includes knowledge. It includes money. It includes personality. It includes group representation; if you're an official of a group, then you have the power of that title. She talked about how women often have preferred to mediate and work things out amicably, as opposed to using the more coercive kind of power of directing or calling the shots.

She talked about the purpose of government, in her opinion, which was to attend to human needs not otherwise attended to. I think that's a really good definition, one that I have also followed, which leads both of us to a philosophy that there is a role for government. This whole attitude that government's bad, that government should be kept as narrow as possible, and if we could do away with government, that we'd be better off—I don't buy that at *all*. That's where she was coming from, too. We don't automatically tend to each other's needs to the point that everyone's needs are being met so that they can be productive individuals. And so, if we're not going to do it ourselves, then government needs to play that role and help some people catch up or to be even with the others. We both had that philosophy.

The *one* point she made here, that I've gone back and thought about just so very much, was that, (and now, she's talking to a whole large group of women) "Too much deference makes one feel inferior, and we cannot afford that."

I think that really applies to me a *lot*, and I've often thought, that's the mind set I get into when I have trouble speaking—the mind set that says, "I feel inferior to those in this room, and that's why I'm having trouble articulating what I want to say." If I can get my mind to switch from that into the mode

that, “I’m just as good as they are. In fact, I may know more than they do on the subject, so I can, with some confidence, share how I feel about this,” then I do not have trouble speaking. I really do think that often where I would be coming from would be in this role of *deferring* to the people around me—that I was in a setting where I was subordinate or I was made to feel inferior. And so, I think her remarks are just so germane to my life.

*And not only your life, but it seems that that role of deference was something still being taught at the time she was giving this speech, in the majority of young women’s lives—1960’s, 1970’s.*

Exactly. This was the traditional way women were supposed to act. Women were supposed to wait to be *asked* to do the things that were outside of their realm, like running for office or like taking positions of authority. You waited to be asked. You deferred, mainly to men, and then you waited for them to accept you in these non-traditional things.

Anyway, too much deference makes one feel inferior. I think I have, in fact, experienced that, and it’s a thing that I have worked on all my life to overcome.

*It helped with the speaking then, for you to keep that in mind?*

Right, because I knew I had moved into a lot of times where I had no trouble speaking at all. I’d go back and try to think what made that time different, and it was either that I was in charge of the meeting, and so I organized and knew that I knew as much as or more than anyone else in the room, or that people were looking up to me for this meeting because I had put it together, and so why should I feel inferior to anyone in the room?

I was in charge, and when I was in charge I had no trouble speaking. When I’d be given *permission* to be in charge, then it was OK—then I was not feeling inferior.

*Right. Can you think of other situations of feeling inferior or that deference?*

Well, just a million things. The worst would be the formal setting of a legislative chamber, where I was having to meet other people’s rules and expectations. [laughter] But that could be informal meetings. I mean, it could be all over the place.

*But a lot of it was about that formality of who should wait, and who should come forward? That was a lot of where you felt that demand to be deferring to others?*

Yes. I can remember an instance (and I thought I was long beyond this) when I was working for Bill Thornton in about 1990. He took me with him to a “good old boy” lunch meeting in downtown Reno, like the Redevelopment Committee or something like that, that he was very involved with. It was a small room—maybe at the Peppermill or somewhere like that. There were maybe fifty people in the room and most of them were downtown businessmen. At one point they went around the room and had everybody get up and introduce themselves. I, all of a sudden, had *real* difficulty doing that. See, that would be a setting in which I would feel inferior. I was not a part of the downtown businessmen. For the most part, they were more conservative politically than I, and I was there at the invitation of my boss. For some reason I had this whole old feeling that I wasn’t a part of that group, and therefore, I had difficulty even giving my name. It really bothered me, because I didn’t expect to have

trouble, and I did. I dropped back into this old mode, for some reason in that setting, that I felt inferior.

*Yes. So it sounds like the speech that Maya was giving was just incredible for you.*

Well, it was. First I wrote it down, [laughter] I took notes and I kept it. As the years went on, it just became more and more true to me, and I would incorporate these things in what I did for workshops, for other women primarily. And so, that's how it all works. [laughter]

*Yes. From that one speech, it's been passed on to lots of women.*

That's right. That's right.

I have a campaign piece that I did pass out, and I didn't promise a lot of specifics. Well, here's what I said, "Jean Ford will work for . . ." and there are about seven things that generally I said. One is "A conflict of interest law requiring state officials to disclose all financial interests." I did co-sponsor that bill, and it did not pass for several sessions.

The early seventies was the beginning all across the country of the whole public interest—the common man getting more involved. Common Cause was formed about that time. The whole reapportionment issue was creating more emphasis on individual citizen involvement. And so, things like openness of meetings, conflict of interest, ethics, registration of lobbyists, were *all* issues that were coming up all over the country. Very few states had things like that in state Legislature.

Registration of lobbyists: Mary and I and some other people co-sponsored that bill, and it was *trashed*. [laughter] When I say trashed,

it did have a hearing in our Government Affairs Committee. The old-time lobbyists, who were so chagrined to see this more public-interest kind of thing going on in the building where all these ordinary people had access, and the lobbyists who'd had this cozy little relationship with the legislators in the old building—the utility lobbyists and the mining industry and trucking industry—they just couldn't relate to these common citizen types who were there mainly for social issues kinds of things. The lobbyists basically felt the less government, the better. That was their philosophy.

So when we introduced a bill to register lobbyists, some of these guys came unglued. At this hearing, one in particular really had been drinking before the hearing. The hearing was right after lunch, and he came not with total control of his faculties. [laughter] He got up and really, really blasted this bill. He was *so* opposed to this bill that it was like something was really *wrong* with lobbyists—that lobbyists were dirty old men. If we had to have a bill to register, then the lobbyists must be dirty old men. Well, the more he talked, the more he showed that that could be true. [laughter] He was shooting himself in the foot—absolutely! The bill died because there wasn't a majority that felt strongly that this was a great idea, but this guy *really* got taken aside by his colleagues and talked to, because he was just *so* out of line.

*Do you dare say who that was?*

Les Kofoed, who represented Nevada Gaming Alliance. I should just go ahead and tell you what happened with that bill. All over the country, these kinds of bills were being introduced and some places passed. Some places they were going on the ballot by initiative from Common Cause groups



that were just really, *very* energetic. After our session, Colorado passed a really strong set of laws that related to registration of lobbyists and ethics.

Right before the 1975 session, Bob Guinn, one of the chief lobbyists who represented the trucking industry, asked for a meeting with me and Richard Bryan. Now, Richard was in the Senate, and I was in the Assembly. He asked for a meeting with us at the office of the Nevada Resort Association. This would have been in the fall of 1974. Well, I was in a re-election campaign; I don't know whether Richard was in the middle of a Senate term or not. But Guinn's message was, "We would like to support a registration of lobbyists bill in the 1975 session." That's how far they had come in terms of seeing the handwriting on the wall.

The Colorado bill had been so onerous in terms of the detail of regulation of lobbyists and other things that were happening like that around the country, that these people knew that eventually it would come to Nevada, too. And so, it was their choice to get in on controlling how the bill was written. I mean, this is *good* politics. This is being smart. Richard and I looked at each other and said, "Ummmmm! [laughter] This is interesting."

I don't know if we both introduced the bill in the Senate and the Assembly, but we had been the sponsors of the bill in 1973, and so we did have a registration of lobbyists bill, and it did pass in 1975—not without a lot of argument and a lot of amendments. We introduced it stronger than it ultimately got passed. But the professional lobbyists supported some kind of registration of lobbying bill, because they just knew that otherwise they were going to get stuck. They didn't know *what* would come out if they didn't get in there and get on the bandwagon. So, ultimately, we did gain on that one in 1975.

Another issue I talked about in my campaign brochure was community-based rehabilitation services for juvenile delinquents, as well as revision of the Juvenile Court Act. Now, revising that act would be in the Judiciary Committee, and community-based rehab services would cost money. I was never on a committee that had total control over those kinds of issues, but I did ultimately serve on an interim committee to look at the Juvenile Court Act that traveled all over the state. We had hearings and did a lot of work in that area.

Creation of the Office of State Ombudsman was another thing I said I would work for: "A people's representative, who receives and investigates citizen complaints against state government and acts upon them quickly." We never got that as a *pure* state ombudsman, but we did get it in some selected areas, like an ombudsman for senior citizens, for the elderly—someone that the elderly could go to and say, "I don't think I'm getting a fair shake out of something."

[Another promise from my campaign brochure:] "Aggressive enforcement of existing state environmental protection laws relating to air, water and solid waste, and new legislation calling for statewide, comprehensive land use planning." Of course, we had started on the air pollution law in 1971, so it was a matter of protecting what we'd gotten passed at that time.

Land use planning was a big issue that was in government affairs, and Mary and I were very active in that. One of the things I learned is the little perks that can come to you along the way. In this case, the Governor was Governor O'Callaghan, and he supported this land-use planning idea. Of course, the main reason it passed is there was a federal law coming down the line that said we were going to have to do it, so it wasn't all that



altruistic. [laughter] But anyway, a good land-use planning bill *was* passed, and Mary and I had a lot to do with it along with Spike Wilson over on the Senate side. And so, we were invited to the Governor's office to have our pictures taken with the signing of the bill.

[The next item in my campaign brochure was] "Revision of the Public Employees Retirement Law, allowing for broader investment policies and increased participation in decision making by those contributing to the retirement fund." Now, I can look back on that, and I can feel pretty certain that I added that as a result of being really lobbied by the public employees group and feeling that that was one of their planks. I had no problem supporting that, but that was not a personal crusade of mine or one that the League had been involved in or anything. That was a political decision. I agreed with what they wanted, and it didn't hurt to say that, particularly if that would help me get supported by the public employees, which meant a lot of votes.

*And this is from the brochure from your first campaign. So that's what you went into the first session with?*

Right, and the other part of it really described me as a certain kind of candidate. This came out of that Q & A that Bob Brown had me do. How do I really feel about certain issues? Why do I want to run? What do I think are my assets? That translated into that I was "the candidate *not* identified with any special interest, who will act in the public interest," and I truly did that throughout my career. "The candidate with firsthand experience in legislative action in Carson City." And that was, of course, my having been there as a lobbyist the session before, testifying before committees. "The candidate with the

reputation for doing thorough research before committing herself on the issues," and that I had a reputation *always* for doing research. "The candidate already working as a member of legislative advisory committees on specific legislation relating to environmental quality and juvenile services."

Then I began to realize, too, that one could position themselves—one could get on those committees which broadened your image and gave you more knowledge and gave you another title, and you could put it on your resumé or on your brochure. So that's another way of gaining power. Part of this was the good professional advice from Bob Brown, who was helping me do these brochures and asking me to think about the answers to these questions.

The last one was, "The candidate with the bi-partisan support necessary to win." Now, you know, there were no Republican-controlled districts in Clark County, so I *had* to have Democrats vote for me to win in the general election. This was reaching out for that, but having been the good non-partisan League leader that I was, that was not difficult. I had a lot of Democratic support.

A *big* issue that came up during that session that I brought up was the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). It was not even an issue I knew existed when I ran for office. The press came to me, because I was one of five women in the Assembly. I think there were two women in the Senate then, so there were seven women out of sixty. But they came to me and said, "What are you going to do about the Equal Rights Amendment?" It had passed Congress the year before, and this was a constitutional amendment—a very short statement (about twenty-eight words, I think it is) that basically was adding to the constitution that women were equal under the constitution.

When they came to me and said, “What are you going to do about the ERA?” I said, “What’s that?” I mean, I had *no* clue what they were talking about, so I figured I better find out. [laughter] I decided I was for it, and I proceeded to get a resolution drafted to introduce it. It was a constitutional amendment, so it’s not a bill. It’s a resolution, a joint resolution sent to Congress that the Nevada Legislature would resolve to agree to amend the U.S. Constitution. Dick Bryan requested the same bill and introduced it on the Senate side.

We had the first E.R.A. hearings in 1973 and none of us knew what had hit us. I mean, it was just an issue that we didn’t comprehend all the complexities, the opposition and the fears that people had. We began to be aware of the whole national controversy over the Equal Rights Amendment. Well, that first session, it was really pretty calm and none of us really knew all the complexities that were coming out of it. That year it actually passed the Senate and then was killed in the Assembly. The resolution that I introduced, I believe, never made it out of Committee.

None of us really comprehended this. It had not been an issue in anyone’s campaign. No one had made promises to anybody, but by the end of the session we were aware that it was a very controversial issue, and that people were really going to take sides on it, and that we all needed to learn a lot more about it. And so, we did. There were national forces getting out pro and con materials on it.

What would be the effect? It was only twenty-eight words, and yet it was going to have a *tremendous* effect on state government and national issues, and there were a lot of myths floating around that were getting in the way of really reasoned conversation, too. The whole idea that we would all have to use the same bathroom—that was one. That

women would be forced to go to war. That equal rights meant that a woman had to go out of the home and earn the same amount of money as her husband in order for the house to function—I mean, just a lot of really simplistic things. It became a *very* complex issue, and remained an issue throughout the seventies.

The following year, we realized it was a bigger issue than we had thought. We decided that it might work better if we had a man introduce the resolution, so we got Bob Barengo, an Assemblyman from Reno who was supportive of the Equal Rights Amendment, to be the *lead* sponsor and it was introduced in the Assembly. It was also introduced that year in the Senate. I’ve forgotten by whom. I think that year it passed the Assembly but did not pass the Senate. So it just criss-crossed.

In 1974 Nevadans for E.R.A. was formed. We realized this was going to be a long haul, and that there was *major* political conflict, so we organized a statewide advocacy group to lobby, and they actually went after raising money to give to candidates and asked candidates to pledge to be in favor before they could get any of our money. I was a member. I *was* one of the key leaders, but I was not a Chair, not an officer, because I was in the Legislature. It was a *mass* movement—lots of men and women all over the state were very actively involved.

Opposition began to develop, mainly from the Mormon Church, other conservative religious groups, the Catholic Church and people who just could see all these literal bad things that would happen as a result of forcing women out of the home. So it got into full-blown political battle in 1977.

*And by then, were you being identified with that also?*

Very much so.

*And only you or other women in the Legislature?*

No. Other women in Legislature, like Eileen Brookman, Mary Gojack, Sue Wagner—they were *all* strong E.R.A. supporters. Helen Herr was in the state Senate, and she was highly opposed. She was willing to speak out against the Equal Rights Amendment anywhere and everywhere. And I was willing to oppose her anywhere and everywhere.

I made *major* political mistakes. I went with the issues of the women's movement by 1975. I had heard from women all over the state, who were discriminated against for a variety of reasons—women who needed help, women who were in abusive situations. I just learned about all these different issues that were important in women's lives that had not been a part of my personal experience. I began to realize how badly we needed equity in the law, and in some cases, compensation for people who had had less than an equal chance.

This was when the National Women's Political Caucus was being formed and the National Organization for Women, and there was just an arousal of consciousness raising and interest all over the country in the role of women. Those of us who were in the Legislature were prime to be key players in that and chose to be either for or against, pretty much. We had women and men who took both sides.

I lost the election in 1976 when I ran for the state Senate and that was partially a factor. The Equal Rights Amendment was a *big* issue. I was not in the 1977 session, but several members of the Assembly had promised votes to both sides. Because there was an agreement that it would never be voted on in the Assembly, they were comfortable that they could tell both the pros and the cons that they

were on their side; so they received money from them for their campaign, et cetera. The agreement was that if it were introduced in the Senate, they knew it would be killed in the Senate and the Assembly would never have to vote on it. It was some kind of plan agreed upon by the majority. And what happened in 1977 was . . .

*Were you aware of that plan at the time?*

No, I was up there as a lobbyist for some other issues—for libraries, for consolidation of Clark County governments. I worked with the Chamber of Commerce that session. Zack Taylor was a very strong mentor of mine in a way. He gave me legitimacy in the business community in those years, even to the point where I actually worked with the Chamber of Commerce, which was kind of an "odd couple" kind of arrangement. We would go up and lobby on consolidation and other issues.

I was there the night that the Equal Rights Amendment was voted on in the Senate. It tied, and Lieutenant Governor Bob Rose broke the tie in favor. Now, that cost him his Governor's race the following year. That was one of the key issues, I think, that cost him that race, but he did what he believed in that night.

All of a sudden, it had passed the Senate. It wasn't supposed to, and when the word got down to the Assembly there was panic in the house, because these guys had promised both sides—it was either eight or nine of them, because there's a button that says "the eight who lied," or "the nine who lied," that the pro-E.R.A. people wore for a long time after that.

The majority in the Assembly voted "no", and it was dead for the third session. Before that session ended, they were all so *sick* of it that they voted to put it on the ballot in 1978 as an advisory referendum—

to ask the people of the state to tell the Legislature if they were really in favor of the Equal Rights Amendment or not. And so, in 1978, it was an advisory question on the ballot. It lost about four-to-one—through really a lot of fear and a lot of misunderstanding and a lot of aggressive campaigning on the part of the anti's, and largely due to the women of the state who were afraid of it, who weren't sure that it wouldn't force them to do things they were not ready to do.

Interestingly enough, ERA was on the ballot at the time that I then won my seat for the state Senate. Politics is crazy. [laughter]

*You were not going to be able to do anything more about it then?*

Well, you know, who would touch it after the people have said four-to-one that they're opposed to it? So the Legislature was *happy* thinking that's one issue we won't deal with. If anybody tries to introduce it, we'll just put it down real quick, because the people have spoken.

*When you found out that that deal had been made later, that it would never have to be voted on in the Assembly because it wouldn't get out of the Senate, what did you learn? Was that a surprise to you?*

Oh, well, that particular thing was a surprise at that point, but that's the struggle for power.

*OK. So, it was not an unusual kind of deal?*

Oh, no. Not at all. People align themselves with other people around the issues that they're going to either support or not, and they go to win.

Now, for the legislators who promised both sides, I don't think much of that. [laughter] The majority feeling in the state at that point was one of fear, and you tend to vote "no" on the unknown. I mean, if you *can't* predict the consequences of something, then it's a lot more difficult to be highly in support of making a move, especially if people are feeding you a lot of fear. You want to avoid it. You want to get away *from* it.

*Because politically, it's almost like you can't win?*

Absolutely! [laughter] There are a *lot* of issues you can't win on, but you ultimately have to make decisions on. And the people from your district often are not a lot of help. I mean, most of the time you don't hear from your people in your district on anything. You get very little feedback from your district.

There are a couple of basic philosophies about how you act as a representative from the people. One is that you say, "I'm going to represent the majority of the interests in my district, or the will of the people." Well, that's fine to say, but how do you know what that will is? Some people send out little questionnaires, and you'll get back a ten, twelve percent response, and they'll say because the majority who answered my questionnaire said "yes" on this; that's the way I'm going to vote. To me, those were *awful* techniques. That just locked you into things that were . . . I mean, that is not the way to go. That's not hearing from the will of the people.

The other attitude is that you get elected to go up there and learn what the issues are all about and do what *you* think is best in the public interest, and that your district is going to trust you to do that—that you become kind of a trustee. To me, that was much more the philosophy that I followed rather than I'm

going to vote the wishes of my district. Sure, the letters that I got, the phone calls that I got, the meetings I had with people, all informed me how individuals felt in my district, but that was never the totality of the people in my district. And those people never had as much information as I did on a lot of the issues. I felt that I had to go make my own decision in the final analysis based on what I knew.

Well, the E.R.A. became a dead issue after that. The time began to run out, nationally. We were in the national limelight, because we were one of the fifteen states that had not voted it in, and that *could*. They only needed three at the end. They only needed three more. So *national* money came into our campaigns. I got money from Iowa, from the Women's Political Caucus in my re-election campaign, because I was pro-E.R.A. And anti money went to anti people in the state. We got money from all over the country, because we were an important piece of maybe making or breaking this important amendment.

Phyllis Schafley, who led and still is a big leader in the anti-E.R.A., anti-woman movement, came to Nevada and spoke to the Assembly. We tried to have people counter that. Others came who were pro. We had, you know, all kinds of hearings down in Clark County. I mean, it was just a *major*, major issue for about eight years, but after that advisory, it was basically a non-issue, and there were many, many people on our side who had given a piece of their *lives* to work on this issue—Nevadans for E.R.A. Some of the leaders really, in a way, never recovered. I mean, it was *so* devastating to work on something you felt was so right, and so American, and then to have this kind of campaign of fear and mis-information shoot down such an important principle.

*How was it for you personally?*

Well, I was *really* disappointed. It was a *big* factor in my losing the election to the Senate in 1976, which was personally very devastating. It wasn't the only thing. I continued to work on other things.

Well, we did begin to realize that we could work on cleaning up Nevada law—law by law. Even if E.R.A. had passed in 1973, that didn't automatically change Nevada law that was discriminatory. The Nevada Legislature had to do that. It *only* affected federal legislation, and the states had to clean up their own acts. If they didn't, someone could challenge and take it to the Supreme Court, and that amendment would be in place to help you win the challenge. It wouldn't automatically change things overnight, which is one of the fears that everybody had. And so, what we began to realize is that the laws that were state's rights, primarily, could only be changed by the state and we could do that without the E.R.A. If we felt we wanted to get rid of a discriminatory law, all we had to do was get the discrimination out of the law, which you could do by either repealing the law totally, or applying it to men as well as women, or putting in a qualifying entry level for men *and* women by which the law would be effective. So you could equalize the law in three or four different ways.

That was another thing that was never clear to the opposition, on purpose. [laughter] You know, they felt the *worst* consequence of anything that could happen would be the way it would automatically be forced. That was part of our problem; we never could get across to the majority of the public that that wasn't the case—that we could clean up the laws in a variety of ways. We had power to control over that, but we could never get that across.

What we did start doing is cleaning up the laws. That was about the time you could start plugging in a word in the computer, and



the computer would spit back to you where that word was found in the law. They began to be able to more easily analyze Nevada law for discriminatory language. That was done under O'Callaghan, and he came up with what he thought was this really, you know, cute answer to this issue. He created a Commission on the Status of People, in 1975 I think it was. We had been clamoring for a Commission on the Status of Women, which had been created by Sawyer back in the sixties, and then it never was created by law, so it died through the Laxalt administration. That was something that many other states had, where they had for years been looking at the role of women in a legalistic kind of way.

O'Callaghan wasn't going to buy that either, but he created this Commission on the Status of *People*, like he was going to be *truly* egalitarian, you know. He put about twenty-five people on it, including anti-E.R.A. people and church leaders and legislators and everything. Their job was to examine Nevada law for discrimination. Well, the staff did, in fact, do that, and they came up with a report that had twenty-five or thirty clear-cut examples of discrimination in Nevada law. The bills were drafted to take care of all of that. Now, that didn't mean they automatically got introduced. Some legislator had to be willing to introduce them, but the work was done on the research to show us where inequities existed.

In property law, in inheritance—a woman could not be a bartender in Nevada unless she was part owner of the bar. A woman could not be a firefighter, a volunteer firefighter. You know, there were just *tons* of these. There were things where a man was discriminated against, as well. One by one, those bills did get introduced over the next ten years, and almost all of them passed, so an effect of all of that conflict in Nevada was to clean up Nevada

law. And truly in this decade, there has been almost no law introduced that, on the face of it, as it got introduced, was discriminatory based on sex or gender. I mean, one would not do that now.

So there *has* been change, but it's not in the constitution at the state or the national level. The next Legislature could do something totally discriminatory. There has to be constant vigilance to see that we don't drop back into feeling like, well in this case, it's OK to discriminate on the basis of sex.

*There's been a lot of controversy about getting rid of the equal employment laws, and that's the type of thing you're talking about?*

Well, yes. Affirmative Action. All of those issues. When do you compensate for inequities? When do you subsidize? If people never started as equal, then how do you make them equal? Do some people need extra help? There aren't any easy answers to that, and those have been major issues in the women's movement. Actually, going for equality in the law is really a very *conservative* [laughter] approach to the women's movement. I mean, equality in the law is not giving equality in reality, because people don't start from equal. So they don't even access it equally. It's very complex.

But anyway, it was a major issue in Nevada, and I got caught in the middle of it. I took a strong position in favor, so that when it came time to run for re-election, or run for the Senate, which I did in 1976, the issues of environment and juvenile delinquency prevention and that kind of thing were lost by my detractors, who made *sure* people knew that I was a radical feminist. By that time, that's what they called me.

Now, I had a *pretty* conservative approach. In fact, I'm not sure I would have agreed that



I was a feminist at that point in time, but my reputation was enough that the Republicans decided they'd rather have no one than have me. So I was not elected to the Senate in 1976 and that was a major reason why.

*How did you get the news that the Republicans had decided they'd rather have nobody than you? Did they tell you?*

Oh, on election night! [laughter] On election night.

*You're not talking about the Republican Committee?*

No, although I was never real popular within the Republican Party in Clark County, because I didn't come up through the party ranks. I didn't pay my dues to the party. I didn't work my way up. I didn't, you know, make coffee at the Central Committee meetings and all that kind of stuff, or campaign for all Republicans regardless, just because they were Republicans.

I was in the League, which was non-partisan, and I didn't *need* the Republican Party to get elected in the Assembly. When I ran for re-election to the Assembly, the 1974 campaign was *very* quiet and very mild, because I had almost no opposition up until the filing day. I was going to be unopposed. The Democrats actually found somebody to run against me and paid her filing fee so that I would not be unopposed, but she didn't actively campaign. I couldn't assume that I could automatically win. One never can do that, so I still had to get out a mailing, and we still went door-to-door. We still didn't know that she wasn't going to campaign until she didn't. But it was much more low-key than the time before, and I did win easily. So then, I was back in the Assembly—re-elected in 1974.

Now an important thing, particularly in the 1973 session, is that my thought about the Senate was just like those guys were *gods* down at the other end of the hall. I mean, that was like an *untouchable* group. I was so in awe of the people who were in the Senate, that I just look back, and I think oh, my!

*Why is that?*

Well, it's perception of power. Here I was in the Assembly, which was by all counts, a major achievement. But still, I looked at the people in the Senate as being another breed; you just really looked up to them and cautiously talked with them. Obviously, I got over that a little bit, probably entering the 1975 session, because that's when I had this increasing awareness that the Assembly was introducing quite a few good things, and they were all getting killed in the Senate, like the ethics bill or the registration of lobbyists. There were things that a majority of us in the Assembly felt were good ideas, and then they'd get killed in the Senate. I thought, "*Wait a minute here, these are good ideas. These ought to happen. This ought to be a part of it.*"

I became very interested in the process and reforming the process. I mean, *I* could see it, and there was a national movement going on to do that. There was a group called the National Conference of State Legislatures. It was headquartered, I believe, in Kansas City. It was a non-profit group that functioned for several years, and they came out with a rating of every state Legislature, right about the early seventies, based on five or six different criteria like how open they were. They came out with a paperback that had every state's ranking, and this all fit in with this national movement to reapportion—the power of the common man.

I can't remember the exact ranking, but we weren't too bad in some things, but we

were really bad in others, like *all* of these issues of standing committees and not knowing when they were going to meet, so if you were a citizen and you wanted to listen to that committee, you could. And that the committees had agendas so many days in advance. There were all of these procedural things—you know, how legislators treated the press, how they handled campaign money as individuals; just a *ton* of different things.

In most states, the Legislature can't call itself into session. The constitution says when the Legislature will meet and then the Governor has the power to call it into special session. Well, why should not the Legislature be allowed to call itself into session, if something very important came up? I mean, that was an idea that was put forth. Now, in reality, all of these are checks and balances in our system to keep the government from running amok—from *abusing* itself—but there are different ways you can go overboard on these things. And so, there was a movement in the early seventies to reform state Legislatures, because they were now getting so much power through this reapportionment that had happened.

Also, the whole feeling of shifting government from the feds back down to the states—that the states ought to have more power to solve their own problems, raise their own taxes, and all that—this was all part of a national movement. And this fit right in with League, so the League all over the country was involved in looking at these ratings of the Legislatures. There were conferences on how Legislatures ought to behave and how they ought to be reformed.

Another thing that happened to me in this first session—and a lot of this, you know, then played out throughout my whole legislative career—was that I realized that you had to move toward the middle to survive.

For me, compromise and negotiation was not something I was used to doing. In the League we went for the answer—what is the ideal answer to this issue? And if the League majority in consensus arrived at that answer, then why not go for it? Well, then you'd get to the Legislature, and you'd have all these varied interests from all over the state that are represented in these variety of legislators that are there, and our ideal answer was way out in left field. Well then, what do you do? Do you hang onto *that* answer, by gosh, and you're going to vote no on anything short of that? Well, that's your inclination when you start out, because you know that's the right answer.

It's kind of like when my husband was back there refusing to get involved, because *he* knew what the answer was, and why argue with all those volunteers? Well, I became kind of involved in that as a legislator. Here I knew that this was the right answer; but I also knew what this guy thought and what that guy thought and what this woman thought, and where they were coming from and what their district was like. I knew that *that* answer wasn't in *any* way ever going to fly in that form. So then I knew that I had to be willing to compromise, and that's where the incrementalism came in. You get your foot in the door this session with a *beginning* start, and each issue's different as to whether that's working. You have to decide at what point do you "throw out the baby with the bath water." What is the point of no return, at which what you're doing is meaningless? The point that you've moved into fluff, and you have to decide that on these key issues?

But the other thing I began to realize, and I did a real study on this, (it's all up in the archives somewhere), probably at least 75 percent of the things we worked on, none of this was a factor. Most of it was mundane, nitty-gritty, state government legislation that

needed to be done for one reason or another that had to do with the changing of the times or new issues that Congress passed. They were *not* controversial. They were just the nitty-gritty of adjusting state government to meet the needs of the people. And the *overwhelming* number of votes we did were unanimous, or very rarely there'd be one or two people vote against. So there's only a small percentage of the votes that are based on *true* philosophical differences of liberal versus conservative.

I began to see that there would be three or four different patterns of alignment that you could expect to happen. One would be liberal versus conservative, and that's the most common. It's a philosophical thing—what role should government play in our lives? Another one that could come up was geographic—the north versus the south, or Clark County versus the rest of the state, or Clark and Washoe versus the cow counties. A geographic alignment would also come up.

Another is political party alignment—not *nearly* as much during my years as happens today. We hardly ever met as a party caucus. The parties were very weak. The parties did not help you get elected. They still don't, for the most part. The parties did not raise the money for you. You raised your own money, so the parties had little power. But once you get there, the majority party has a *big* bunch of the power. You organize by that majority. The committee Chairs are all the majority party, so party becomes a big factor in who's more equal than others once you're there. And so, alignment by party would occasionally happen where just plain old Democrats would vote one way and the Republicans another.

The fourth alignment, that would happen for a short time at the beginning of the session, was the old-timers versus the newcomers. We always have had in the Nevada Legislature a fairly significant turnover— at least twenty

percent, I think, every session. That twenty percent *really* are like I was in my first session, and they think they're going to change things a *lot*. They come with agendas, and then they get cut down to size *real* quick in different ways—by learning that none of them are committee Chairs, for the most part, because there are enough with seniority back to chair all the committees. The freshmen learn they have to get to know that committee Chair and be nice to him or her. They just learn all these things I'm telling you—that some are more equal than others, that ideas that they think just *have* to happen were introduced in five other sessions, and we learned ten reasons why it wasn't a good idea for it to pass. They learn pretty quickly that they're not going to change things overnight. So it's really a slow process, but a struggle for power and a *legitimate* struggle for power.

*I'm assuming as we talk about this, that that's part of why you believe in the system—there's a wisdom to the system in which you work?.*

Oh, yes. I mean, I don't know. Some things about the legislative process, I do not like at *all*. The brokering, which we haven't talked about at all. You know, once the election night is over and you know who's been elected, then either the Democrats or the Republicans are in power to organize, and they caucus and they decide who's going to be the Speaker. And the Speaker gets to be Speaker by giving out to his legislative colleagues what they want: I want to be Chair of Ways and Means, or I want to be Chair of Health and Welfare, or I want to be on the Commission, or I want to be ABC. Every legislator decides his or her list of wants, and someone gets to be Speaker by giving them. The one that gives the most people what they want gets elected Speaker.

Now, that's *terrible*. I mean, you get people in positions that don't have background. We're all citizen legislators. We have to earn our living some other way. It just doesn't make sense. Well, how else would you do it? Would you draw straws? That's not going to give you a better result, necessarily. It could, I suppose. Do you let the Governor decide? I mean, how *do* you do it? I haven't come up with a better answer than the brokering for power that goes on. I don't like it, but I haven't come up with a better way.

So some things you learn to accept as the process, but then you balance it in other ways, like once the institution is organized for the session, trying to develop enough standards by which it's going to operate. Well, the key is electing people who have a commitment to working in the public interest and wanting to do a good job. And the majority of people *want* to do a good job, but they are *not* prepared to organize and handle the process in an efficient manner. So those of us who like doing that kind of thing set out to reform how the Legislature works. And that *never* makes one popular, because the people with the power, if they really liked that change, they would've been changing it.

So again, I took on the aura of a reformer, a troublemaker—somebody who wanted to keep changing the system. And in many ways, that's not good. Now, Joe Dini did that, and he got away with it. Basically, he helped *me* get away with it, too, quite a bit, for awhile. I got *very* involved in that end of it—in looking at the Legislature as an institution and trying to make it responsive to the people. Just a lot of legislators didn't like that at all. I mean, it just bothered them.

*So your reputation as a reformer and your reputation with the E.R.A. were things that were starting to stack up against you early on?*

Yes. And the women's movement. It was *broader* than the E.R.A. It was the whole women's movement, in general, and introducing bills that had to do with that.

I was the chief sponsor of, oh, probably about fifteen bills in the 1973 session. One of them that was signed into law restricted the removal of flora and endangered species. That had to do with cactus— just pulling up cactus out of the ground—[laughter] things like that. It was given to me, I think, by somebody in state government who felt there was a need for that—maybe the Division of Wildlife and/or State Parks— and so I introduced the bill and it did pass. Only legislators can introduce bills. Lots of people can request that a bill gets drafted, but it's only a legislator that really decides to introduce it.

Open meetings for legislative committees—I introduced that bill in 1973. I felt very strongly about that from the beginning. It passed the Assembly. It lost on the Senate floor. That continued to be a big issue until, I think, just this last election when finally the constitutional amendment was passed to take out a statement in the Nevada Constitution that the Senate can call itself into executive session. As long as that was in the constitution, it was an obstacle to our passing a law that said all meetings have to be open.

That year, when I first introduced that bill, it was sent to Attorney General Bob List for an opinion, and that's part of why it lost on the Senate floor. He said, with this Constitutional language, the Legislature didn't have the right to give itself an open meeting law because the Constitution allowed it to have an exception. And so it has taken like twenty years to get that exception out of the Constitution—that the Senate could call itself into executive session.

Now, it *rarely* ever did that, but members of the Senate just didn't want to give up that power, thinking that they might want to go into secret session sometime. As long as that was in the Constitution, we could not make ourselves have an open meeting law. So that was kind of a quirk that the public never really understood. While we were passing open meeting laws for local governments, people would keep saying, "But why don't you do it to yourself?" We literally couldn't. We were trying to do it to ourself, but it took a Constitutional amendment to do it, and it took a long time to get that on.

AB 209 of that session required registration of lobbyists; that was killed in committee. Earlier I described the hearing on that bill. One bill that was signed into law enabled voting assistance for the physically disabled. A conflict of interest law was killed in committee; that's one that I was the key introducer. That really said you cannot get personal gain out of serving in the Legislature. If a measure is such that you could personally gain from that measure, that you should declare that conflict and not vote on it; that was killed. Control of erosion in timbering operations was a bill that I introduced that was signed into law.

"Legislative Committees Made Statutory"—this was a legislative reform bill where we set out in law basic committees that weren't going to change each session. At that point, the leadership could create any kind of committees they wanted every session, so there was no continuity. A group of us introduced a bill to make the committees statutory. It actually passed the Assembly and was killed in the Senate.

I introduced a bill for an appropriation for a state park office in southern Nevada that passed the Assembly. It died in Senate Finance, but approval was given to use

existing funds to open an office, and that office was opened and started to function, actually, out at Valley of Fire State Park, I believe.

An urban transportation act was killed in committee. Then the ratification of the Equals Rights Amendment, and I have already talked about its history.

Something I did introduce that session was a one-house resolution, an Assembly Resolution (A.R.), that adopted standing rules for Assembly committees. That was just basic: every committee will have a Vice Chair; every committee will keep minutes; every committee will schedule public hearings on bills. I mean, this sounds like basic standard operating procedures, but up to that point the Legislature had never had that kind of thing. A committee Chair called a meeting when he wanted to. (And when I say "he," I don't know that there'd ever been a woman Chair of a committee up to that point, so it was "he.") And they didn't always take minutes, [laughter] and you didn't know what bills were going to come up until they started. It was *terrible* for the public. It was just like a little club there that got together when they wanted to. Well, I proposed standing rules. I'm sure there were others who co-sponsored that with me for Assembly committees only, and that passed. So that session we started having rules by which every committee operated, so that the public would know what was going on.

I co-sponsored legislation that created a work-release program in the prison system that passed, and another bill that lowered the age of majority to eighteen for certain types of acts. The mandatory dedication of park lands—that's the bill Mary Gojack and I introduced. That was *so* opposed by the homebuilding industry. I mean, they came unglued with that, because we were really setting up an option for local governments to pass an ordinance that said, "Whenever



you do start a new development, a certain proportion of your land has to be set aside for a park somewhere in the area.” If they were only going to build two or three houses, it didn’t make sense to create a park for two or three houses, so that quota of land would be set aside to go with more land to create a neighborhood park somewhere in the area, or the value of that land could be put into a fund for the capital improvements of parks in the area. But every developer had to contribute something toward open space in neighborhood parks at the time they filed and got permission to build their houses. That’s what that bill was all about.

Well, you can imagine how the homebuilders felt. Of course, that was going to raise the price of the houses, they said, which it probably did. People who buy houses like to have parks, so we felt there was a lot of merit in this bill. This was something that was happening in some other states. It wasn’t an original idea with us. That truly mobilized the homebuilding industry into creating a lobbying core that became *extremely* active—very strong, very effective—from that point on. I mean, they realized they had to have a presence at the Legislature to *protect* themselves from people like me and Mary Gojack and the kinds of bills that we introduced.

It *did* pass. It *did* pass. It was a major piece of new policy developed at that session. The homebuilders just became, oh, *livid* toward the end of the session. They thought, “We can go up there, and we can stop this from happening.” It would not have passed had we not had support from our colleagues—first in Government Affairs, like Joe Dini and Hal Smith. Then when it got to the Senate side, people like Spike Wilson and Cliff Young were very supportive of this type of legislation. They carried the bill. Somewhere along the

way, these guys decided that this bill had merit and that it was going to pass. And so they went to bat for it, got the necessary number of legislators to support it, and it was a major victory. The business community, primarily the homebuilders, were *really* chagrined, and that led them to dig in their heels and really create their own force for protecting themselves in subsequent sessions.

Land Use Planning passed. Mary, Spike, and I were invited to the picture taking when the Governor signed that bill. That was also the session we created a Youth Services Agency within Health, Welfare, and Rehab. We also passed a presidential primary law that session. And then I introduced a joint resolution. Joint resolutions are not laws. They are messages to Congress memorializing them to take action of some kind in areas that *we* did not have the power, but Congress did. This was to memorialize Congress to transfer the Red Rock Canyon lands to the state of Nevada. This was one solution to protecting Red Rock—to make it all one big state park. Now that, as I recall, passed.

You know, these often have *no* weight in Washington. [laughter] A lot of it depends upon how the Congressional delegation feels and whether they want to go to bat for it, but what it did was show Nevada’s strong support for protection of Red Rock Canyon. Period. What ultimately came out of that was the state acquiring the private in-holdings, but then creating this partnership agreement between the BLM to manage its lands and the state to manage its lands altogether as one park. The in-holdings that the state acquired were called Spring Mountain State Park, but the whole area was called Red Rock Recreation Lands, since it was jointly managed by both the BLM and the state parks. This kind of resolution showed public support and legislative support for that kind of thing.



I actually found a concise report that I made to the Republican State Central Committee about the 1973 session which gives me an accurate picture of some of these things.

Coming out of the 1973 session, I talked about the fact that the Legislature often appoints interim committees to study things they're not ready to deal with in formal law. If they don't know what to do with something—if during the session, they don't have enough information, or they just can't deal with the issue politically [laughter] because they're divided—then one answer is to create a committee to study it between then and the next session. Sometimes that's an absolute cop-out, and other times, it's a needed step—they truly *don't* have enough information, and they *do* need to study. Two committees were appointed that I was to be a member of. One was the Study of Legislative Operations and Procedures, which was this *major* look at the Legislature as an institution and how it operated, and was chaired by Joe Dini. I was elected Vice Chair of that committee, and we'll come back to some specifics about that.

The other one was a Study of Unincorporated Town Government, and I was very active on that committee. I can't remember if I chaired it. I don't have it down here [referring to notes], so I guess I didn't. We had hearings all over the state, particularly like in Douglas County, which has all kinds of unincorporated towns or assessment districts that are operating for the delivery of services, like snow removal and utility districts and water districts. Clark County, where I lived, also had all of these unincorporated towns as a result of the struggle between Las Vegas and the county. Las Vegas wanted to annex parts of the Strip, and there were powers that kept that from happening that were concerned about whether the sheriff or the police chief

was going to be in charge of law enforcement on the Strip.

There are nine unincorporated towns in Clark County, some of which are urban-like cities—Paradise, Winchester, Enterprise. And people don't really comprehend how that works at *all* in Clark County government.

At that time, unincorporated town government became a *big* issue—what kind of animal is this; what kind of power; should the boards be elected directly by the people? And so we had an interim committee that went around the state and conducted hearings on that. That was also of great interest to me, and I was active in it.

We go to interim activity once the session is over. I was appointed to these interim committees, which met all over the state. I represented Nevada at some out-of-state conferences. On most of these, I would've had my way paid. The Legislature would set up an interim travel budget for legislators to be on these kinds of committees, and that's always controversial—how much of that is appropriate and how much sounds like a boondoggle of some kind?

It truly is very important to connect with legislators in other states. These conferences *can* be very important. It all goes back to the individuals, and what attitude they take to the meeting. [laughter] Are they going to take a vacation or are they going to do work? And for the most part, I think, most Nevada legislators used that money wisely and went to those conferences to try to learn and to share what we had.

Between the two sessions, I went to the National Municipal League Conference in Minneapolis. I went to a national seminar on openness in government at Williamsburg, so this would've been a *real* place where I got a lot more sense of the need for legislative reform. I also went to a WICHE Conference on

Higher Education in Phoenix and an Order of Women Legislators Conference in Salt Lake City. At that point in time, there were only a few women legislators all over the country. Since then it's tripled or quadrupled—the number of women in Legislatures. But this was a little organization that had been created by women legislators who were real veterans, and a group of us from Nevada went—Margie Foote, Eileen Brookman. I remember specifically, the three of us went to this in Salt Lake City, and we were just, oh, *empowered* by meeting other women, many of whom had been in Legislatures a long time, and that was just a *wonderful* meeting.

I mentioned this Center for American Women in Politics that had a seminar in 1972 and brought women legislators together. Out of that, they put out a report of what those women legislators thought. Many of those same legislators were at this meeting, so it all gets blended as to where I learned what. But I was learning all of this stuff about how women were functioning successfully in other parts of the country, and what you had to do to succeed. And that women *were* succeeding, but for the most part they had to prove themselves over and over again: that you had to do your homework; you had to be better; you had to be better prepared than the guys in order to stay even. That kind of thing was often talked about.

I attended a seminar on Collective Bargaining and Accountability in Higher Education in Las Vegas. I attended a seminar on the corrections aspects of the criminal justice system in Carson City and a workshop on public assistance at the Stead campus in Reno. These were all things where I would be selected by legislative leaders to represent the Legislature. I was often selected, because the people who did the selecting knew that I would do a good job of listening, of gathering

information, of coming back with ideas. And I had the time. I was a housewife. The others came back after the legislative session and tried to start making a living again, where I had the luxury of being a full-time legislator if I wanted to. So again, that was another reason I might be asked to go.

*And when you went to these out-of-state conferences, between sessions, then you brought the information back in session, what was the form in which you delivered the information?*

Well, it was very informal in some ways. I'm sure I made some kind of report in writing to the Counsel Bureau, and it went in a file somewhere. I would share it with legislators who cared about the issues I cared about, and it would get used sometimes in the following session. We would make reference to it.

The Interim Study Committee on Legislative Operations met between the 1973 and the 1975 sessions, and it came out with a *major* report. I was invited to write an article for a magazine that no longer exists, but for a number of years was called *Nevada Government Today*. I think it was a product of the League of Cities and the Nevada Association of Counties. This article I wrote in collaboration with Joe Dini. Basically, I wrote it and sent it to him and got his approval that we both be listed, because it was to my advantage to have him as the committee Chair endorsing what I was saying.

That committee received a sizeable budget from the Legislative Commission to have hearings around the state. The committee also looked at this national report that the Citizens Conference for State Legislatures had put out, where they ranked all of the different states. It was called *Prospect for Greatness*, and that report really praised Nevada lawmakers for the forward steps they had taken in recent

years, such as building their own building and requiring fiscal notes and adopting these standing rules that I got on in 1973.

The Legislature was already moving to some degree in that direction, but in this report we came out with thirty-eight major recommendations to strengthen the Nevada Legislature's ability to be independent from other branches; to be free from undue pressure of vested interests; to be responsible to public needs; to have the means to communicate with the constituents and the tools to do the job of formulating policy, evaluating programs, and budgeting to implement services. So those were in several categories, and I think they're worth mentioning, because it was a *major* priority for a group of us.

The overwhelming majority of these have since been passed—not *all* the first session when they were introduced, but they have. The first category had to do with recommendations that could make the Legislature more accessible, more visible, and more accountable.

Parallel standing committees in both houses meeting at parallel times would facilitate joint hearings; the Legislature now has *almost* parallel standing committees. There's always been one or two variations, but for the most part they have adopted parallel standing committees. And they do *much* more now to have joint hearings on bills so the public doesn't have to come once to the Assembly and another time to the Senate. They can come once, particularly from Clark County, and testify to both committees at the same time.

Statutory guarantee of open legislative committee meetings: that could not happen until the constitution was amended to remove this obstacle, but that has now happened or is in the process of happening. (I can't remember quite where that's at. I think it's

passed.) Standing committee rules requiring advance notice of agendas; recorded votes on all committee action; standardized minutes; and complete committee records available for public review—that is a reality. That started happening pretty quickly.

A public information specialist to prepare factual reports of legislative activities and interpret the functions of the Legislature to the electorate—I don't think that's happened *per se*, but the legislative staff has been given the job of being pretty user-friendly to the public. So I would say that's happening. Actually, the research division of the Counsel Bureau puts out what they call research reports at the beginning of every session, which are reports on controversial issues that the Legislature's chewing on, so I think that would be one way of implementing that, and those are free. You can just go to the Counsel Bureau and get copies of them, and that's been a great public service. By the way, I always had a strong working relationship with the Research Division and appreciated the outstanding work by Andy Grose, Bob Erickson, and Fred Welden.

Another one was adoption of measures governing disclosure of lobbyist activities and expenditures, campaign finance regulation, and disclosure of legislators' personal financial relationships—more successful on registration of lobbyists. The creation of the Ethics Commission was a vehicle for looking at specific issues that might come up. Campaign finance has been the hardest to implement, and that's true all across the country and in Congress. And it's the one, of the three of those, that I felt less strongly about. I felt *really* strongly about registration of lobbyists, and I worked to see that that happened. I felt really strongly about ethics and disclosure laws. Campaign finance from the very beginning—I could not see any way that you could ever make it work.

One year we passed a bill that limited how much a legislator could spend on a campaign. In fact, that was in 1975. And then the U.S. Supreme Court threw that whole concept out in *Buckley v. Valeo*, which said, “People have a right to contribute money to campaigns, and you can’t limit that.” Now, there have been some limitations the Supreme Court has been willing to accept, but it’s just *fraught* with problems. You can come up with all kinds of rules and regulations, and there are a million ways for people to get around them. People *will* get around them. There’s no way to regulate, short of having a police force that does nothing but look at how money is being spent on campaigns, and that’s prohibitively expensive. So it’s just really almost impossible. You have to come at it from the angle of, people have to want to make this work in the right way, and then you run right smack up against the expediency of politics and wanting to get elected to get certain issues done. So it’s really fraught with problems. [laughter]

*In fact, we’ve just had an example of that, with Attorney General Frankie Sue Del Papa withdrawing from the Governor’s race because she could not raise the campaign funds.*

Absolutely. Right. Right.

We also recommended establishing a citizens’ commission on the Legislature with appointees representing the state’s major constituencies. That never happened, but we got that kind of dialogue going other ways. Legislatures, you know, are always against creating more committees where you have to fund their travel, and with good reason. It can get out of hand.

Then there was a whole set of recommendations that could result in a more informed Legislature with increased capacity for responsible policy formulation. Now, this

is about how can the Legislature itself do a good job, regardless of the access the public has to it? How can it *know* what it should be doing? That included things like pre-session orientation, which now happens, where you bring the Legislature together ahead of the session, and they go to school, particularly new people, and learn the process and get reports on issues, and learn where there are resources they can read and get up to speed.

Joint interim committees composed of the standing committees of the previous session, which meet periodically in between sessions—that has still not, to this day, happened. That is one thing that I think would do more to increase the efficiency than *anything* else.

*Because there’s no continuity then with the interim committees?*

There is no continuity, and the committee structure changes and, of course, the people change based on who gets elected. But there is not enough work done outside the session, and that’s why the session goes as long as it does. That’s *one* of the reasons.

Provide for Legislative Counsel Bureau staff to review administrative rules and regulations—the staffing of the Counsel Bureau has gone beyond anybody’s wildest dreams, as well as the expansion of the building, actually, to the point where I think it is overkill. I mean, I think there has been so much money put into an elaborate building, and the staffing is very important, but I’m not sure that that hasn’t been abused to some degree.

Professional, full-time staff support is necessary for standing committees. That is definitely the case. That has happened. Standing committees should be reduced to nine in each house, and we did cut down on

the number of committees, and it's pretty much parallel committees. Then there's another whole section that could result in operations of the Legislature throughout the biennium, not just when it's in session, because we're one of only about six states that meet every other year.

Electronic voting—that was being installed in the summer of 1974. That meant electronic voting of the legislators, themselves, on the floor. The first session I was there, for every vote they had to call the roll, and you said “Aye” or “Nay”. And then by the 1975 session, we had a button on our desk that we could push.

Pre-filing and pre-printing of bills; that is now happening. Pre-session orientation is happening. The adoption of a series of deadlines governing requests for bill drafting—the Legislature has tried to do that. It has *never* been successful, and that is why you have the log jam at the end. Part of that is power politics, and the Legislature is not willing to discipline itself in that manner. It just likes that power that it gets from being able to wheel and deal at the end of the session.

*Do you see that ever changing?*

I don't know. I don't know. What's going to be on the ballot this next session is the opportunity to limit the Legislature to 120 days every year or 100 days every year. Anyway, there is an annual session question on the ballot that limits the number of days, and the Legislature will *have* to introduce things like this in order to meet those deadlines. I'm sure the public will vote that in, so we'll see if the Legislature can do it. And that's going to be hard to do. That's really going to be hard. Then change the name of the commission to the Joint Legislative Coordinating Committee—

that was not a most important thing, and that did *not* happen.

Another whole set of recommendations could result in increased participation by all legislators in decisions on fiscal matters and the budget process. If you aren't on the money committees, you have no power at *all* over the budget, and is that really right? I mean, should nine (or now, I think it's thirteen) members of the Assembly have total power on the budget? When it comes to the floor, it's just accepted that anyone who tries to amend it at that point is going to get shot down. I was voted to represent my district in the Legislature. One of the most important things the Legislature does is adopt the budget that spends the state's money, but if you're not on the money committee, you have no power. So we tried to balance that out by encouraging participation of the various policy committees in the budget hearings along with the finance committees. Like, if they're going to have a hearing on the university budget, then the Education Committee ought to sit in on that hearing. Well, that hasn't really happened. There's a big logistics problem in that, and it's creating a lot more hearings for a lot more people.

Review of audits performed by the audit division by the standing committee of each house—that is happening. The separate appropriation bills requiring ten thousand dollars or more be referred to the Policy Committee before it goes to the Fiscal Committee; I think that has happened in some extent. Weekly scheduling of time in the general session of each house for the finance committees to present progress on what they were doing; I think that has been done. A requirement that all bills introduced with financial impact on state or local governments have a fiscal note—that has happened, and that's been extremely important. So there have been some things that have changed.



It used to be the Governor presented the budget to the Legislature, and the Governor's staff prepares the budget, and that's still the way it happens. But starting back about 1977, or 1979 at least, the legislative fiscal staff, who would serve the fiscal committees during the session, have been in on that budget-making process. They get reports all along the way, and they get the budget. Used to be they didn't get it until the Governor presented it to the Legislature after the Legislature was convened. Nobody knew what was in the Governor's budget, neither the Legislature or its staff, until he presented it the second or third day of the session. And so, right there, everybody started cold on something that was *very* complex. Now, the legislative fiscal staff gets that budget and is in on discussions, I think, with the Governor ahead of time. So *they* know what process went on within state government on these various agencies and are much better able to help guide the legislative committees on just the background.

*There's not that lag time of understanding what's behind the budget items?*

Right. Right. Right. And so that has been implemented. Those are the categories of recommendations. There were lots of other little ones that came up.

We gained a lot of support from groups like the Junior League, which took on legislative reform as a major issue. They had earlier not ever been particularly active politically. The Junior League was more of a young woman's social group developing skills—community skills, but not politics. And during the seventies, the Junior League became much more interested in issues and changed whatever they had to do to be able to even go to bat for some issues they felt strongly about. Water was one of them. They

did a big study—back in the seventies—on the wise use of water in Nevada, and how we were ever going to survive with the water we had, and on water conservation. They went to bat for legislation in Carson. Another was the child care and support for women and children issues related to them. Another was legislative reform. They got very involved in supporting that, so it wasn't just the League of Women Voters. Then Common Cause was created and just a *lot* of groups.

Well, anyone who wanted better access to the process would support this stuff, so we had a lot of support. But again, it was up to these legislators, many of whom had a lot of years or seniority, who didn't like giving up their power. Most legislative reform measures called for giving up power over the process—making it more open, more accessible. They began to feel they had to give something. We'd devoted so much time and energy to it. Joe was moving up in his personal power within the Legislature as a force to be reckoned with, and if he wanted it, then it became a high priority of his and others who supported it. We had some victories and other things, but it took a lot longer. Others, as you can see, still have not passed.

Those of us who pushed all of these changes *really* took on the aura of troublemakers—reformers—that we weren't content to be able to work within the process that we already had. That cost us support on other things. Some legislators can be really . . . They can support you or not, based on very petty reasons.

*Can you remember any examples that came out of your getting that reputation as a troublemaker?*

Oh, yes. I can remember a *major* one, and I think it was in the 1975 session. I



believe it was the legislative affairs committee, which held a hearing after the Legislature started on all these recommendations that we made. I had done my own little study of how many minutes we spent on the floor actually legislating. You can do that by reading the *Daily Journal*. At the beginning of the sessions, sometimes you're there ten minutes, fifteen minutes, half of which is in protocol of one kind of another. Until bills start coming out of committee, there is nothing for you to do on the floor. So it's really important that the committees gear up quickly, and that's why things that could happen in between sessions are really important, and that bills get drafted ahead of time.

This study about how little time we spent legislating was an argument for interim committee work. Well, I reported this that night, these figures that I'd done, and two or three members of the committee attacked me on that and just *publicly* put me down. It was really devastating for me. I mean, I left there barely able to contain myself and went back to my room with some of my friends and just sobbed for an hour. I was so angry that my colleagues would do something like that to me, which I didn't expect and which isn't accepted. Even if you disagree, you treat each other with respect. I was not treated with respect that night. I was ridiculed for doing what I'd done. I can't remember who these people were by name, but they would say, "You know, we have better things to do than to listen to you come up with this kind of information." I mean, they just *really* put me down. And I did it in good faith, feeling I was being rational and logical and showing that there were ways we could improve what we were doing, which everybody should want. But I found out everybody didn't want, you know.

I remember Channel 10, Hank Tester was there from Las Vegas with his television camera

covering a piece of what the Legislature did every week, and I think he even interviewed me that night. It was all I could do to not just burst into tears, because I was so hurt that I would be treated that way. But it was over the issue of legislative reform, and they just weren't going to put up with my spending my time on things like that.

*And you hadn't realized how much this was going to push individual buttons?*

No. Oh, no. Oh, it did. Oh, I was just a basket case that night! [laughter] I didn't know what to do, but that's the *worst* instance. Other times would be just, you know, that your bills would get killed. The majority of legislators would vote no. They would rationalize why it was not a good idea, and oftentimes it would be money. "We can't afford to spend more money on more staff, or to make more copies of the minutes, or make more reports," and all that.

You get elected in November and you start serving in January. I think the 1973 session went until sometime in May. OK, then you can kind of get your breath and come home, but now what are you going to do? Well, because I had the luxury of not having to work outside the home for pay, I spent my time on constituent work. I made myself available to any and all groups that wanted somebody to speak about what went on at the session.

I realized then, (and I did this forever) one of your best ways to run for re-election is to do your job and to make people aware of what the process is and have them understand the process—try to give them a feeling that they're a part of this government through you, the legislator. One way is to speak to public groups without campaigning, to do it in something other than as "vote for me," to

bring them hardcore information on issues they cared about. That was non-threatening.

I was delivering information, and I was remaining visible. I was getting to know people. I was hearing what their issues were. What it was, was year-round campaigning for re-election, but I loved doing it, and that to me was an important part of being a legislator.

And so just a laundry list of speaking engagements I had in 1973-1974: the American Society for Public Administration, the Society of Professional Engineers, the Republican Women's Club. The North Las Vegas Library had a panel on rape. That had been an issue in the session before, and we talked about possible legislation. The League of Women Voters, A.A.U.W., the Kiwanis Club. Lions Club wanted me to talk on reorganization of local government. Soroptimists wanted to hear about women in prison. Common Cause wanted to hear about legislative reform, as did the Junior League. State conventions, like the Nevada League of Cities, Nevada Association of Counties. Home Economists of Nevada wanted to hear about women in politics. The Nevada Wildlife Federation wanted to hear about Red Rock Canyon. The Republican Men's Club was interested in how to reorganize local government. And then there became numerous appearances on television programs, radio talk shows, and newscasts occasionally.

You moved into this world that now you are a public figure back home. You know, when you're in Carson, you're 450 miles away and just one of many public figures. And so I *loved* that part of it, and I devoted a big piece of my time to it.

Out of that came some legislation for the next session, but I also started a pattern of writing letters to my constituents. I had done that in the campaign, and then after the campaign, I developed a report to the

registered voters of District 15. I didn't send it to *every* household, because I really couldn't afford to do that, but I think I sent it to selected ones. One time I think I sent it to 300, and then I built that to 600 households in the district—people that I had cards on, that either had given me money, or I knew had personally worked in my campaign, or had written me letters during the legislative session.

That was another big thing—how to respond to your constituents during the session. *Very* difficult to do. I did not receive a lot of mail. One gets much less than you would imagine. But the mail I did get, I tried to answer or make phone calls to people. That was *very*, very hard to do, because you are really scheduled every day for your committee work and on the floor. The only times you have to do letters to constituents or to return phone calls is very early in the morning or maybe in the late afternoon for maybe an hour or something. That's all the time you had. There just was *no* time.

Then you started getting phone calls from all these people wanting you to do certain things that you had to try to respond to. You're on a treadmill the whole time, between the floor and committee work and the social schedule in the evenings, which was a very important part of it. (I had realized this back in 1971—how important the social schedule was, because that's where you could talk to people informally.) Now, I was doing it legislator-to-legislator. I would try to catch those guys that were in the Senate, that I needed to convince to support things I wanted to have happen, and about my only time I could do that was at a social occasion. It was an extension of your work, and you spent long hours.

So the letter to my constituents, I sent out on June 1, 1973. I say here in the letter, the session ended on April 27. So the first paragraph just kind of gives you a flavor:

“Dear Registered Voters of District 15:

Representing you at the recent 1973 Legislature was a unique experience for me—challenging, frustrating, rewarding, exciting, mentally and physically exhausting, all combined in 102 working days, January 15 to April 27 in Carson City.”

People would always say to me, and they still do, “Did you enjoy being in the Legislature?” And my response very quickly became, “Enjoy was never the right word.” I had more good days than bad; I was willing to keep at it. It is this constant pull of all your responsibilities and all your *personal* priorities that you want to see happen, because you feel strongly about them, and keeping in touch with your district and the struggle for power that’s going on. And then just, you know, the physical schedule of everything. And then I said:

“Now that I’ve had a chance to unpack and unwind, catch up on my sleep, and somewhat adjust back to being cook, housewife, and mother, I’d like to report to you briefly on the 57th session.”

This is a two-page, single-spaced letter on what happened. I briefly mentioned *major* legislation—which the media had basically reported on, so I didn’t spend a lot of time on that—then important measures that were defeated. And then:

“I learned early in the session, there was little time for me to have much influence on measures that weren’t in the committees on which I served. And those committees kept me busy, as we considered more than 450 bills in those daily meetings, plus numerous evening and weekend sessions.”

*450 bills in 102 days.*

That’s right. I mean, that’s just my committee—those three committees I dealt

with—and every other group of committees were doing the same thing. Only the bills that came out of committee to the floor got debated and voted on, so you had these two layers of work. And then I said, “What were the issues I was most concerned with?” And I basically listed those I had in my brochure and what happened to them.

I talked about community-based rehabilitation services for juvenile delinquents. I couldn’t remember why I got into that, but here in my letter, it reminds me that I had worked on drafting these bills during a series of statewide workshops in 1972. So that would have been League of Women Voters. We did that booklet called *Children in Trouble*, and so we would have been invited to some workshops to talk about how to create a better process for handling juveniles. Then community-based rehabilitation would have been something the League would have strongly supported.

Then I talked about other measures I particularly was interested in. And then I wrote, “Now, the session’s over. There’s still much to be done, and I plan to continue to be actively involved.” I talk about the legislative interim committees that I’m on.

I ended the letter by talking about my constituents and their reaction to me. I said:

“I appreciated receiving over a hundred telegrams, letters and phones calls from those residing in District 15 with quite a degree of varying views expressed. Teacher negotiations, acupuncture and other health-related bills held the highest interest from my constituents. I continue to be interested in your concerns and am now available to assist you in a variety of ways. I can provide information on specific legislation coming out of the session, meet with small groups to discuss problem issues as they arise, speak before community groups to which

you belong. You might not be aware that by using a series of numbers, a 1-800 number, (which I then list) you can telephone any state agency in Carson City at no cost and speak directly with those who can give you more information. You can reach me at 735-0375.”

I always gave out my phone number and felt that was a very important part of serving—being accessible. You don’t get that many phone calls. If I had been constantly barraged day after day, I might have changed my mind on that.

And then I put a “P.S. Many, many thanks for all those volunteers who helped with this mailing. In case you wondered, this letter is not printed or mailed at public expense.” So again, I was real conscious of wanting to be *of* the people and not abusing the office for personal, political gain. I did probably have some money left over from the campaign, or else I just paid for it out of the money that I had.

That kind of letter was a pattern with me. I sent it out after every session. In the 1975 session, I sent one out about a month into the session to 600 households, told them kind of what was going on and invited them to come to Carson and that type of thing. I always enjoyed doing that, and I felt like it kept my constituents aware of what was going on, and they responded really well to that. They liked that.

I wasn’t the only one, so other people do it. It’s only feasible really in an Assembly district, which is small. In the Senate district, you could still send it to 300 or 600 key people, but you just started then getting into much larger numbers of people. Certainly our representatives in Congress send newsletters all the time, but they’re printed at a printer. They’re done by a P.R. firm, probably. They don’t have the personal touch that the kind of letter I sent did, which was obviously from *me*, produced on my typewriter.

The other kind of *community* affairs that I was involved in during that time, that were not directly related to the Legislature—I served on the Board of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, the Nevada Wildlife Federation, and the Clark County Youth Services Commission, and then later, starting in 1974, Nevadans for E.R.A.

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## LEGISLATIVE SESSION, 1975

*But it was becoming clear to you over time that part of this was because you were advocating change, and that you were being labeled as a troublemaker.*

Oh, yes. Right.

This letter [to my constituents was written] in February 1975, four weeks into the session, and I sent it to 600 households in the district. I said:

“The committee assignments this session are Government Affairs, Taxation, and Health and Welfare, and all three committees anticipate heavy workloads, which is going to leave me with little free time to pursue other interests and priorities. To date, the big issues have centered around the Equal Rights Amendment and legislative reform. As you might guess, I’ve been greatly involved in both. I was one of twenty-seven out of forty Assemblymen voting *for* ratification of the E.R.A., and I would be happy to send to you, upon request, my position statement, my formal remarks in floor debate as recorded

in the Assembly Journal and other resource materials interpreting the effects of E.R.A.”

I did that voluminously, because there was so much rumor and misinformation floating around about what the E.R.A. would do, that I wanted people to know what I said and to have some background material. And then I said:

“As a result of the interim study on the effectiveness and efficiency of the Legislature, some forty-five bills and resolutions were introduced last week, which if adopted would make the Legislature more efficient. These bills are opposed by many legislators, particularly some in positions of leadership, as they would begin to dilute the power now held in the hands of the few and open up the process to more participation by the public and the Legislature as a whole. We hope for one large public hearing on this package of bills. Watch the news media for details. I am a chief co-sponsor of this entire package.”

Then measures I had introduced to date included a bill providing procedures for enforcement of assessment liens with

regard to condominiums. That came out of a condominium homeowner association in my district that asked to meet with me in the interim and told me about problems of the homeowner associations assessing and putting liens on their property.

Another bill established the Nevada Archeological Survey, and that would have been given to me by a state agency or something, because I had belonged to this amateur archeological organization, but I did not draft the bill.

I was appointed to a select committee of the Clark County delegation to prepare a package of proposals regarding reorganization of local government, the expanded new city concept of Las Vegas, possible consolidation of transportation, planning, solid waste. I was assigned to this committee chaired by Senator Gibson [James I. Gibson(D)] and evaluated proposals in the light of positive benefits for the residents of Paradise Valley.

AB 219, making provisions on wages, hours and working conditions apply uniformly to all employees without regard to sex—that was a *major* bill of mine that session. I introduced the bill to eliminate discrimination based on sex in the world of labor. Stan Jones was the head of the state labor office (I've forgotten what it was called then), and he worked very closely with me on it. At that point, Nevada had a law that said an employer could hire a woman at *less* than the minimum wage for ninety days—just plain old do that—and it was called a probationary period. That was only for women, not for men. I think the minimum wage at that time was something like \$2.19 an hour. [laughter] That was one of the things that we wanted to delete—just hiring a woman at less than the minimum wage.

If they wanted to have a probationary time, then they could hire a man or a

woman, but it shouldn't discriminate. What was happening in reality is they would hire a woman for ninety days, then fire her and hire another woman for ninety days and get around paying the minimum wage.

There was another law that a woman could not work more than eight hours a day or forty hours a week. We were the last state in the union to have that law on our books. There was another law that said a woman had to have a ten-minute rest period in every four hours that she worked and other kinds of things as well. *All* of that was grouped into this one bill, and these kinds of policies had been very commonly introduced and passed in Congress, as far as federal work was concerned, and in the states twenty or thirty years earlier, as a way of protecting women against sweatshop kinds of conditions—protective legislation.

Well, by the seventies, this legislation was keeping women from getting jobs or hassling them on the job. If you couldn't work more than eight hours a day, then somebody who needed people to work *ten* hours a day could not hire a woman, even if they paid overtime. So it really limited the kinds of jobs women could get.

*Which would probably then also be some of the better paying jobs?*

Right, but we were the last state to deal with some of this. So this bill was *very* controversial. The business community was not happy with this bill at all. It was one of the very last bills to pass. It did pass, but in the closing hours of the session the two houses passed different versions. Then it had to go to a conference committee, and there was a *lot* of compromise.

Finally, businesses of fifteen employees or less, it didn't apply to at *all*. I mean, that



was the way you could weaken the bill. They began to see that something was going to pass, that the time had come to eliminate this discrimination, but still they've come up with this argument that for the small shop owner, this will put him out of business. You know, economically, this is going to hurt them to the point that they can't function. That's what they said. So the powers that supported weakening it got on a measure that it didn't apply to fifteen employees or less, which was the majority of Nevada businesses in a lot of towns—the little small shops and stuff. That was how it passed, but it still applied to big businesses. And it made a change. It was a major piece of legislation.

One of the reasons AB219 passed is there was a federal suit saying that we were not abiding by the *federal* law in some instances. The bill I introduced, along with eleven co-sponsors, removed laws which restricted the employment of women and extended to men the benefits of over-time pay, and guaranteed meal and rest periods. In the case of meal and rest periods, the way we dealt with that is to extend that to men, instead of eliminating it entirely. If you felt it was reasonable that one have a ten-minute rest period and a time to eat during your workday, then both men and women should have it. So that's the way we cleaned up the bill.

In 1973, bills which I sponsored calling for a lot of openness in government had indignant opposition from those who said, "Nevada isn't *big* enough for all that. After all, everybody knows everybody." That was part of what these old-time lobbyists *and* old-time legislators were saying. But it was interesting in this year of post-Watergate morality to see resistance melt away, as everyone got on the bandwagon and even the professional lobbyists who had fought us in the past recognized that the public was demanding

its right to know. Citizen initiatives that had passed unreasonable reforms into law in California, Washington, and other states *could* happen in Nevada, if the Legislature itself didn't take action. However, some logical measures failed to pass because they were backed by those of us not in leadership positions. I did not give up and was invited along with Senator Spike Wilson of Reno, to represent Nevada at a week-long school for legislators sponsored in July by the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University.

The Eagleton Institute was a private, non-profit endeavor that had no direct strings to government. It was funded by a foundation grant, and it could be pretty independent in the way it wanted to operate. The Director was a very dynamic man named Alan Rosenthal. The Eagleton Institute got a grant from some major foundation to invite fifty legislators from twenty-five states each year for ten years to come together for a week and talk with each other about legislative reform. They also had people from the Citizens Conference of State Legislatures and academic professors, who had studied the role of the state Legislature in the American government process. It was the most incredible experience—all expenses paid, first-class travel [laughter] to a very fancy hotel, the Breakers in Palm Beach, Florida. Spike and I were the two representatives that year. Joe Dini had gone earlier, and that was one of the reasons *he* was fired up about legislative reform. This was a place where you really learned all this background from all over the country on what was happening with legislative reform.

I met just *incredible* legislators, some of whom I have continued to correspond with to this day, and many of whom who have gone on to be Governors of their states, or attorneys general, or played other key roles in government. One was Madeline Kunin, who

went on to become Governor of Vermont. I remember specifically women legislators from Oregon that went on to move up into positions of power; one male legislator from there, who then became Attorney General; legislators from Texas—a man named Craig Washington, a black man who is now in the U.S. Congress, either as a Representative or Senator. He was a part of my class of 1975 in this particular institute.

At the end of the ten years, they had a reunion, and a whole group of us went. It was an incredible meeting of people who had really made a difference all over the country. I went to *many* of these things. This was one of the best, one of the most prestigious and had the most impact on me—connecting with legislators all across the country; connecting with other women; connecting to learn how they were handling things. What I saw is that there *were* legislators in other states that cared like I did about the institution as an institution. It made me really sad that we couldn't build enough support for that in our own Legislature to really make it an institution that showed a lot of leadership in the right ways.

I was in the minority in a number of ways. I was in the minority party both of those sessions. I was in the minority as a woman both of those sessions. I came labeled as a reformer, because I came through the League of Women Voters as my major background, and I took on more of the label of reformer even after I got there. So all of these things, you know, did *not* put me in exactly the best standing with my colleagues. To find others of like minds was very . . . Oh, it was just very encouraging, I guess I'd say.

I put in my constituent letter toward the end of that term something I called "a sober thought."

"The lack of action on legislative reform led me to a rather disturbing observation regarding the session in general. Too many measures were not considered on their merits. Instead, their outcome was too often influenced by the power and/or personality of the sponsor, the political party affiliation, vote trading, or the Governor's wishes."

Governor O'Callaghan was the Governor during this time. He had a *tremendous* amount of power over the Legislature. I mean, people knew if he said, "I won't buy that," that he wouldn't buy it. You had to give it to him on that score—that he was candid and straightforward. [laughter] If he vetoed the bill, you had a big hurdle, so lots of people would go to him ahead of time and make the bill accommodate his thinking—remove this section, add this section, do what you need to get O'Callaghan's support. And sometimes that was good, and sometimes it wasn't too good. But he had a *tremendous* amount of power over individuals.

*I can't imagine that that statement in your letter made you any more popular, accurate as it might be.*

No. No, it didn't. [laughter] Well, my constituents liked that, because they believed that I was trying to do the right thing, and that really paid off, even though I lost the next election. [laughter]

There are some reasons why I did that. When I won in 1978 in a really big way, I knew that because of my stance on things like this. . . there were always a lot of people who voted for me although they did not like some of the issues I dealt with (particularly in later years, my position on E.R.A. and my position on abortion) because they felt I was honest. I was going to do what I thought was

the right thing for our district, and they really liked that in a person. They knew they would never agree with everything I did, but I got *lots* of votes that way. So that's fine. I always said I never minded getting a vote if it was because I was the lesser of evils.

There was a group called Committee for Uniform State Laws that was started about that time. There was a national group called the National Conference of State Legislatures. It still is active—N.C.S.L. It was headquartered at that time in Denver, and it had an annual conference every year (it still does) to which legislators go.

The N.C.S.L. was funded by state Legislatures, so it was controlled by the state Legislatures. A *committee* of legislators elected at the annual meeting acted as the governing board of the staff. It put out excellent reports on what was happening in the states, and the annual conference was excellent—workshops and resources, libraries of material. And so we went to those things as well. You had to get *approved* by the Legislative Commission to represent Nevada at those meetings, but most people were, within reason, for the ones who wanted to go to. I went to *many* of those, and I represented Nevada—like on the National Ethics Committee—and brought back lots of things from those meetings.

Coming out of the 1975 session was a major study committee. I mean, this is a Legislature that is citizens who come together, supposedly only get paid for a hundred days and should get all their business done and go home and not come back for two years, which doesn't make any sense at all; but that's the way we were operating. So we should be able to operate smarter when we *were* there, and reform of that institution became a major issue for me, and also for Joe Dini, who ultimately chaired this interim committee.

I was put on that committee and became a strong colleague of his in every way, even though I was still a Republican.

We co-authored articles in Nevada magazines on government. Actually, I did most of the writing, and he agreed with me, which was *fine*. That was a way to gain power, you know—to position yourself where you did some of the work, with the person who had more power than you endorsing it. We were a team, and we did *agree* on this. He agreed on a lot of the procedural things that we needed to move into.

One of the things, for instance, was this idea that between the election in November and the beginning of the Legislature in January, that there ought to be a pre-session orientation, where people who'd gotten elected came together and had some kind of understanding as to what they were getting themselves into. I mean, like really not a bad idea! This had *never, never* happened. Never happened in this state. I remember our talking about this in either 1973 or 1975 among the Republicans, because I saw what happened to a colleague of mine, who came the same time I did, named Jim Banner. He was a laboring man who represented a blue-collar district in Las Vegas. He introduced a bill early in the session. He'd never been up there before. And I've forgotten what the bill had to do with it, but he referred it to a committee, which is what you do. You refer it to a standing committee.

The powers that be in the Legislature wanted to send the bill somewhere where they could kill it. What they would do then is someone would get up and say, "I'd like a one-minute recess." And that's always honored, as a courtesy, and so the Speaker would say, "A one-minute recess." Then people would go around and talk to whomever they want to.

These people all got together and took Jim's bill and agreed to put it in another committee where they'd have the control. So when we came back together again, one of them got up and said, "Well, I amend that motion to put the bill in commerce," or something. (I've forgotten exactly what they did.) But Jim didn't know that he had the power to call for a vote. He could've won that, but he didn't know that. He let those guys take control of his bill, because he was a freshman, and he didn't know what rights and powers he had parliamentary-wise. I don't know that I agreed or disagreed with his bill, but I felt sorry for him as a legislator who did not know his rights to his own power—especially because he didn't know the moves, like in a chess game. He didn't really know the strategies available. He didn't know he could *challenge* what those other people did. That he could call for a vote, you know, instead of letting them make another decision.

There were several instances like that that went on. I remember in our little Republican caucus saying one time, "You know, wouldn't it be better if we had a pre-session orientation, where we could all learn some of these basics before?" Another reason is that you don't waste so much time. You get more done in the amount of time you're there, which is always an issue. Lawrence Jacobsen, who was one of the senior people and who, in fact, is *still* in the Legislature, was the senior member of the Republican delegation there in the Assembly. He just turned to me and said, "No, let them learn the hard way, the way we did."

There was *no* sense of a feeling that we should work together as an institution for the betterment of what our purpose was—to be the people's branch of government. There is this feeling of individual power and control. And I'm not saying that Lawrence Jacobsen didn't introduce a lot of things that were for

the betterment of Nevada, but at that point he saw *no* value in extra time to get legislators together and teach them how to be legislators. I mean, that made no sense to him at all and he just put it down.

Well, eventually, we did get pre-session orientation, and a lot of people did it kicking and screaming. I don't think it's in law that we have to, but it's a regular part of the process now that the legislators do come together sometime in December, and they learn where the bathroom is, and they learn if they're going to have staff or not, and they learn a little bit about parliamentary procedure and legislative process.

All those kinds of things were a major issue that came out of the 1975 session—this *major* look at legislative process. Joe chaired the committee and I played a major role in that committee. We had hearings all over the state, and we came out with a *huge* report with forty or fifty recommendations for change. Over the next ten years, the majority of those things were passed and are now operating. So it was an idea whose time had come with state Legislatures in general. That was a major interest of mine. I wrote extensively about it for newspapers, in magazines, and I worked on it a lot.

My interest in this had to come from my background in the League, because I was *apolitical* when I started out with the League. I just was not into this at all. And so, the appreciation of the institution truly did come from my involvement in the League and my study of government in general.

Then I became connected with this National Conference of State Legislatures. One of the real wonderful things about being in the Legislature is then being able to be a part of the national scene—going to the national meetings that are so put down by the press and others when legislators do

that. But it is *such* an important element to be able to connect with your colleagues from other states and talk about how you deal with environmental issues, or how you deal with taxation, or with others that have been doing it other ways.

The states *are* what Justice Brandeis said, “the laboratories of democracy,” and they are. I mean, that’s where you can try out something and see if it does work or not. Oregon will try something, and Minnesota will try something else, and then you have to *know* that they’re trying it and what’s happening. There are publications that come out from the Conference of State Legislatures that tell you what’s going on with these laboratories of democracy, and then you can decide whether you’d like to try it in your state or not. So there’s a lot of cross-fertilization that’s *very* healthy.

There are national committees that you can be put on, and I was appointed to a National Ethics Committee that was just an *incredible* experience. I met with legislators and judicial people from other states, and actually ended up writing a chapter in a book that was published about ethics in state Legislatures.

I just had this really strong feeling about the Legislature as the people’s branch of government, and *quite* distinct from the judicial branch, which is there to mediate between conflicts, or to make sure “we the people” do interpret the law correctly when there are conflicts on how one interprets the law. And the executive branch is there to administer the law. But it is the *Legislature* that makes the law, and so it is the people’s branch and, therefore, I felt very strongly that people had a right to have their ideas considered.

I would *never* support limiting the number of bills a legislator might introduce. Now, that was abused by some legislators,

who just didn’t know when to quit and had personal agendas and all the rest. But still, you don’t control it by saying every legislator can only introduce ten bills. I mean, if I had people in my district that felt strongly about something, then I owed it to them to get that idea placed on the table to be heard. Then the Legislature can decide—it’s not a good idea, but it deserves to be heard. That’s why it takes time, and it takes money.

But the Legislature has to be *trained* to do it right. That’s where pre-session orientation is a good idea. Committee Chairs ought to be trained in how to be a good committee Chair. They shouldn’t allow people at a hearing to ramble on and on for thirty minutes. That’s non-respect for everyone, and yet some Chairs do and then half of the people in the room don’t get to talk at all. Sometimes they go away feeling cut out.

It goes back to me feeling like there’s a way to organize it. Well, that’s the *last* thing that most of my colleagues would want. That Chair has the right to run his committee the way that he wants to. If he wants to exercise his power, he can, and if he wants to let his friends talk, he can. That’s just the way it goes. That’s just the process. Well, I don’t buy that. I mean, the Legislature just really should be concerned about the public interest.

Sure, it’s going to have to vote on hard questions where somebody loses and somebody wins, but as an institution it owes a lot to the people. And that’s why we’re in big trouble in this country today—is that we’ve lost that respect for the institution, partially because the legislators themselves have not acted as statesmen, as leaders. They have not taken the reins and done it in a responsible manner, so that the people’s branch of government operates well. It doesn’t, and that’s not good. People get disillusioned. They don’t vote. They don’t care.



*I'm really struck by the fact that, probably in a lot of people's minds, they think that someone goes into politics because they have issues or things that they want to accomplish. And what I'm hearing you say is that you went in, and you looked at the structure of how it works and said, "How can we improve this so that the best comes out of it?" It was also the era where this is happening. Did you also find other people who had that insight and interest that you had?*

Oh, yes. Absolutely. Joe Dini was one. Spike Wilson was another. Jim Kosinski was another in the Senate. There were a lot, otherwise these things would never have passed. Some of them passed, because logic and merit *did* win out on a few things. [laughter] That was another big "Aha!" that came to me that first session—is that logic and merit wasn't necessarily ever going to win you anything. That you had to have a majority who agreed with you to vote yes, and then you could get *anything* on. It had nothing to do with logic and merit. And so, that was a big revelation.

Very rarely did the Speaker's ruling ever get challenged from the floor of the house over which the Speaker presided. One time, the Speaker presided and was challenged on a parliamentary maneuver of some kind. He made a decision, and that decision was challenged, and there had to be a vote. The majority of the legislators voted against the rule that was right—the majority broke its own rules. I mean, that was *really* frightening. And they did it because they all went with a certain legislator, who had an agenda and who they wanted to be nice to. That was very frightening to me—that the Legislature would not have enough respect for its own rules. The Speaker ruled in the right manner and the majority voted against him. The majority knew that they were going against what the

proper ruling was, and they did it anyway because the legislator who wanted that had gathered their votes. I saw that happen two or three times, and that was frightening to me. But that's the struggle for power and how it played out at that point.

Legislative reform was a *national* movement, and Common Cause got created by John Gardner and company, and chapters were created all over the country that then pushed for some things that I could not buy, because by this time I was *in* it, you know. I could see that some of the things they said were so unrealistic that you couldn't function at all, and so I couldn't buy all the fine print that would be in a Common Cause bill, because I just knew it wouldn't work. I was looking for some kind of balance.

Another part of the Eagleton Institute was the Center for the American Women in Politics, which was created about the same time I got elected in 1972. It had sponsored this Conference of Women Legislators, whose booklet I had read that had empowered me. Well, a woman named Ruth Mandel was the head of the Center for American Women in Politics. She and her staff were at this institute, and they particularly connected with the women that were there. Out of fifty, there probably were ten women, so we got our own brand of empowerment and networking going.

When I was in the Senate in 1980, we created a network of women legislators all over the country, and I was one of the co-founders of that. A state Senator named Harriet Keyserling from South Carolina was the other, and we met at the same time the National Conference of State Legislatures met. We would come a half a day early, or we would sponsor our own workshop on women in politics, and how to get along with these guys, and how to be effective. Harriet and I were



Co-chairs of that—I think for four years—and Ruth Mandel’s Center for American Women in Politics would be a support system for us on that. The NCSL staff in Denver gave us support, if their governing body said to do it, but they were controlled mainly by male legislators.

There was a *lot* of consciousness raising going on during the seventies. More women were getting elected every time, and they were moving up in positions of power, and they were a force to be reckoned with as individuals and then collectively. I was a part of that during that decade.

*This was part of your increasing awareness and activity in the women’s movement?*

Oh, yes. *Very* much so. One part was through the Legislature itself, and what I’ve just described—legitimate things to do and positions to hold as a legislator connecting with people all across the country. And then another part was happening through the women’s movement itself—through the Equal Rights Amendment issue and all the organizations that were born during that time, not just on the E.R.A. but on other issues: the National Women’s Political Caucus, which started in the early seventies and started a group in both Reno and Las Vegas; the National Organization for Women (NOW) that started and created groups in both Las Vegas and Reno; the old, traditional organizations like (AAUW) American Association of University Women and (BPW) Business and Professional Women that got *very* involved in the Equal Rights Amendment and other specific issues relating to education particularly. The Junior League became radicalized to some extent and started saying, “It’s *as* important to look at what role our government is playing as it is

to know how to properly serve tea,” and that kind of stuff. And all of that fed on each other.

Then, in the mid-seventies, a very important thing happened (and we’re kind of shifting here to talk about the women’s movement for a minute), and that was that Congress passed a bill endorsing the U.N. Decade for Women, from 1975 to 1985, as I recall. I don’t think it’s something that Congress would ever have initiated on its own, just like the Nevada Legislature would never have initiated this; but coming from the United Nations, the United States had to do something to support it. So they passed this bill recognizing the decade for women, *and* they actually created this process by which there would be a National Conference for Women in the United States in 1977. To get ready for that, the bill said every state will have a state conference for women. Each Congressional delegation appointed in their state a committee. The committee to organize the Nevada Women’s Conference was appointed in the fall of 1976 and the winter of 1977, and that coincided exactly with my loss in my bid for the state Senate.

About twenty-five people were appointed to serve on that committee to create the Nevada Women’s Conference to prepare for the National Women’s Conference. They even gave us \$25,000. Can you believe that? I mean, this was *unheard* of. It really was an *incredible* thing that happened. Well, this was happening in all the states all over the country in this second coming of the women’s movement, which started in the late sixties with Betty Friedan’s book on *The Feminine Mystique*. (Her book was actually published in the early sixties, I think.)

Then other things were happening along that line coming out of the Civil Rights Movement, coming out of the poverty movement, where women had been working

on all these *other* causes. In the early seventies, women started working for themselves and the whole issue of equality became alive. Well, when Congress passed the Equal Rights Amendment, it came out to all the states, and that gave visibility and a forum in which all these issues would be discussed.

By the mid-1970s, the whole second wave of the women's movement was in play, and all these new organizations had been created. Now, you also have Congress kind of endorsing this idea that we ought to be examining the role of women, and that every state should have a conference, and there'd be a national conference. All of this had led to *my* devoting a tremendous amount of my time and attention to women's issues and to the effects of the Equal Rights Amendment. I joined most of those organizations that were created. I couldn't be real active, because I was in the Legislature, but that gave power and prestige to them for me to be there, along with others like Mary Gojack and Sue Wagner and Eileen Brookman and many others who were out there fighting these same causes.

My image became much broader in some ways, in that I went from libraries and parks, to openness in government, and then to the women's movement in a really *major* way. Well, I guess you wouldn't say that it narrowed, but that allowed my detractors to take pieces—particularly the women's movement side—and paint me as *only* being concerned about that. In the mid-seventies, it didn't take much for anyone in Nevada to be labeled a radical feminist, you know. [laughter] It didn't take much to cause that to happen even though what you're doing was, by all comparisons to other parts of the country, *very* conservative.

*We'd talked earlier about when Betty Friedan's book, The Feminine Mystique, came out*

*and that you didn't have, personally, a lot of awareness about the movement.*

I did not relate to *any* of that. I did not relate.

*But as this started to evolve, you were really relating to it, personally and professionally?*

Oh, yes. Well, but it was very gradual. I still would not have called myself a feminist at *all* in 1976. But I could see inequities in the law, and that was currently my job—to work on law—and so I really went to bat on that. And then women came to me and told me their stories about all the discrimination and abuse, and things like that. So my own awareness was getting raised on problems that people had.

One of the things that I was always interested in was how the public could have access to information. As a League member studying these issues, we needed that access in order to come up with facts. I got very involved in that and worked with librarians and others in state government to talk about what kinds of information we're talking about, and then how they should be handled more efficiently. Out of that came a look at how some other states were handling things.

That resulted in a bill that I introduced in 1975, which was AB 525, and it did have money in it, but it was first referred to the Committee on Government Affairs. It called for consolidating the way Nevada state government provided information to people. The bill recommended three different reports. One was a directory of state officials, because there was no such thing at that point where you could simply get a list of who was elected and how to reach them—telephone number, address. That would be in all three branches of

government—the Legislature, the executive, and the judiciary.

Another was to create a biennial report of the state every two years in a format by which every agency would report on its accomplishments, its problems, its work of the biennium to a central location, which would then put that into one bound volume that would become the *Biennial Report of the State*. In this, one could do one-stop shopping in terms of finding out some of the major things that had happened.

What was happening at that time is that a number of agencies had, by law, a requirement that they make a biennial report to the state, or an annual report depending upon the law, and that would be an individual agency report. There was no indication as to how long it ought to be, how many copies, how it should be distributed, how fancy or not fancy. And so the agencies who had those requirements did *everything* from A to Z. Some of them did them very elaborately, very expensively, in really odd shapes that cost a bundle of money to print in that manner. Others did a one-page mimeograph sheet, and they had no system of distribution. Were these really being effective? No, and some of it was very costly. So we thought the idea of consolidating it into one big report had a lot of value, and it being available in libraries and accessible—people could purchase it.

The third report was mainly just statistics, called *The Statistical Abstract*, which would take *all* of those statistics that agencies create and put them all in one volume, so if you only wanted a statistic for some reason, you would go to that volume. If you wanted the *major* changes that were taking place in the agency and how it functioned, you'd go to the *Biennial Report*. If you just wanted to know who was in charge, you'd go to the directory. So these three kind of made sense as an efficient and

effective way to give everybody access to what they needed regarding government.

This "Access to Information" bill, AB525, was a high priority of mine. I introduced it, and I had a number of co-sponsors, as I recall. It didn't come out until April. That is *really* late in the session—or it was then—to introduce a bill. That's because there were difficulties with the bill drafting staff from getting it any earlier. I probably had maybe fifteen, sixteen co-sponsors on it—the Library Association, the Bureau of Governmental Research at the university . . . A number of people had helped work on it and were supportive of it. One was Joan Kerschner, on the staff of the state library, with whom I worked very closely. (She is now Director of the Department of Museums, Library, and Arts.)

We sent copies of the bill to a whole long list of people who had supported it, and there were news releases. I held a conference with the staff from the state library and the UNR Bureau of Business and Economic Research to discuss the bill, and we talked about minor changes that needed to be made.

I learned that the Governor was absolutely against any new advisory committee. (Oh, another thing we had done was to create a publications advisory committee, and so we agreed that that wasn't vital to the bill—that we were ready to compromise on that.) The library agreed to consider sub-contracting the development of *The Statistical Abstract* to the Bureau at the university.

I got a chance to talk with Governor O'Callaghan, and he said he would not oppose the new library positions if the money were approved. He would come out with these statements like "No new taxes," which in my opinion was very irresponsible, because he did this for like eight years. You know, there are just times when it is possible that you need a new tax for a certain thing, and yet

his saying no new taxes just put the kibosh on anybody suggesting anything. Politically, it made it difficult to come up with answers. That made him very *popular* with people, but it wasn't necessarily good government. In this case, he was saying, "If this position isn't in my budget, I'm not going to support the bill." Well, they *weren't* in his budget. The money we needed to appropriate would create some staff to carry this out, and at this point he said he would not oppose these positions *if* the money was approved.

[Here's how I reconstruct the sequence of events from my notes:] "We had a hearing before Government Affairs, and eight people testified in favor, none against. Following a brief discussion, the committee unanimously voted 'do pass.' It went then to Ways and Means." So what we did was the initial first step. Basically, the people in my committee thought it was a good idea, but now, we're into May.

"The hearing date was difficult to obtain, as they (Assembly Ways and Means) were concentrating on completing action on the Governor's budget, which is always the case. It was finally scheduled with a one-day notice for 6:30 a.m. on a certain day. That's not uncommon. I testified along with representatives of the state library. No action was taken by the committee. Ten days pass. I talk with the Ways and Means Chair, and he assures me they will take action on the bill. I talk with various members of Ways and Means to urge the Chair, Don Mello, to schedule it for action." This is me lobbying my colleagues.

"I know the session is rapidly coming to a close. The pressure's on to wind up, and I need to get it over to the Senate, but it hasn't even passed the first house. The bill was finally voted out of committee with a 'do pass' and scheduled for action on the floor.

I made brief remarks before the Assembly, and it passed 39 to 1. The one 'no' vote was Lawrence Jacobsen. Then it was introduced in the Senate, referred to the Committee on Government Affairs. Of course, I had talked with the Chair, Jim Gibson, ahead of time, and he agreed that hearings in his committee should be dispensed with and referred the bill directly to Senate Finance, which he also served on. That saved us some time.

"I urged the Chair of Senate Finance, Floyd Lamb, to schedule the bill for hearing, knowing we are within two or three days of adjournment by this time. He does not appear to support it and is critical of its late appearance in the Senate, but reluctantly says it will be taken up the following day. The representatives of the library and I testify on the bill before Senate Finance with two of the seven members absent. The Speaker of the Assembly, Keith Ashworth, also speaks in support." (Now, that would have been a real coup on my part to get him over there.)

"The committee asked several questions. We were dismissed. Later that day, I was told by a Republican member of the committee that the bill is dead, and I try to ascertain why. One reason given is that the Director of the Budget Office is opposed, implying that he's followed the Governor's orders. I call the Governor himself and am assured that he does not oppose the bill. I ask him to send a message to that effect to the Chairman of Senate Finance."

I was working on my master's the year following this, and I reconstructed what happened. Otherwise, I would never have been able to remember.

Now, from a chronology that I put together for a graduate paper: "I talk with committee members who have been absent. They say they will support it if the Chair calls another committee meeting. I try to talk with

the Chair. He avoids me. He gives excuses. I go again to my Republican colleagues on the committee. They tell me I'm getting the run-around from the Governor, that he *is* opposed, and that the Democrats are going along with him. There is no time to check this out. The leadership announces plans to adjourn the following day. The committee does not meet again. We go into marathon general sessions to resolve conflicts between the Senate and the Assembly on major issues and complete all pending action. We adjourn sine-die. Time has run out."

Now, *later* I was able to put together a picture of what really happened in those last few days. According to the May 17 minutes of the Senate Finance Committee, the *last* meeting for which any minutes are recorded, my bill was given a "do pass" by the majority of the committee, with the Chairman voting no. However, the bill was never reported to the Secretary of the Senate for action on the Senate floor. Instead, the Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, during an informal recess, gathered the members of the committee around his desk. This was not uncommon in the closing days of the session for one thing or another. He gathered the members of the committee around his desk, informed them he'd had additional information regarding the bill, that the Budget Office was really opposed to it, and he intended to hold the bill. Through an illegal action, this is what occurred, and the session ended without the bill being brought to the Senate floor for a vote, even though it had been duly passed by a majority of the committee. I think that the actual record in the journal for that indicates that the bill was held in committee. So he covered himself by this so-called meeting at his desk. You know, no one in their right mind would fight him in the closing hours of the session on a bill that

wasn't of *major* policy importance to the state. It was a good bill, but it wasn't earth-shaking in that regard.

[Again from my notes:] "Disappointment really hung heavy over those of us who had worked so hard for this and started at least a year ahead of the session. It was *really* hard to accept the loss, because the logic in favor of the bill was so great and the reasons for its loss were so unclear, or finally so political."

It was quite a bit of time after the session before the opportunity arose for us to put together the bits and pieces of evidence and analyze our defeat. We *did* that, and in retrospect, these factors emerged: "The lateness of the bill's introduction gave us less time with which to work, although you can't say that's why it lost. The weakness of our fiscal note—we had been unable to develop a clear, cost-effective position, even though we knew that over time the project could become self-supporting. Had we gotten our facts together earlier and held a hearing before the money committee had a hearing, they might have adopted the bill in concept and removed from agency budgets the monies needed there to help make it happen. So that would have not been any extra *new* money needed. Another factor was the attitude of the Governor and the Budget Office, and this always remained a question mark. We were never really clear who was voicing their opinion when.

"The attitude of the Chairman of Ways and Means: It is a well-known fact he could have moved the bill much quicker if he chose to. To some, it appeared almost deliberate that he allowed it to get to the Senate too late to receive proper treatment, which *any* Chair has the power to do on *any* bill.

"The attitude of Floyd Lamb, the Chair of Senate Finance: Unfortunately, reasons for opposition to a measure don't always relate to their merits. In this instance, the Chair



may have been influenced by the fact that I had been instrumental earlier in the session in my Government Affairs Committee in killing a pet bill of his, which was a vindictive measure against the State Park system for some actions that had resulted in some poor publicity for the Finance Chair. That had to do with things that related to the acquisition of the Spring Mountain Ranch as part of the park system and an appraisal that was done. He ended up questioning the integrity of the appraisal, indicating that the park system was playing politics.” This cost the State Parks Administrator his job, ultimately, because Floyd Lamb was so angry that we had gotten money to buy the Spring Mountain Ranch, and he didn’t care about Red Rock Canyon. He wanted *his* park (which was Tule Springs and which later became known as Floyd Lamb State Park) to get all the attention in southern Nevada, and he didn’t like what the State Parks was doing. And we did something else earlier. I mean, he had some bill that we killed, because it was a bad bill. Well, he turned right around and paid me back, and that’s the reality of what some people do as legislators.

As I said in my constituent letter: “Related to both of these reasons was a general dislike for my advocacy throughout the session for measures of legislative reform, which these leaders took to be a threat to their control. I had received the label of troublemaker and been *warned* that bills under my sponsorship would have tough going.”

*Who warned you?*

Friends, you know, in the Legislature of either party.

And then the *last* thing was attitude of the members of the Senate Finance Committee: “In view of the fact that the bill received an official ‘do pass,’ it’s disturbing that they

allowed the Chair to get away with holding it from being voted on by the Senate. This reflects the power of a committee Chair and also the weakness of committee members who would allow the illegal circumvention of the official rules of a legislative body.”

*When you say it was illegal, is there anything that could have been done?*

[laughter] That’s a good question. I often thought about that. How can you force the Legislature to follow its own rules? I think there could be some citizen action. There could be some kind of legal action that could be taken, but one would never *win*. I mean, so you’d win, look at what process you’d have to go through. That’s still a good thing to research. I’d like to know. [laughter]

That particular session, I felt that a lot. The leadership had instituted during that session a rule in the Assembly that they would not accept more than like ten or fifteen bill draft requests from one legislator. That was not a standing rule. That was just the Speaker and his buddies who said, “This is the way it’s going to be, guys.” I felt that was *totally* unfair for the reasons I’ve given earlier—that this is the people’s branch of government. Now, there are ways to handle legislators introducing too many bills, other than putting a limit. So that was another thing that went on during that session.

That was the session that I also saw the Speaker come up with a parliamentary decision, and the Legislature overruled him, *knowing* that he was absolutely right. They overruled him to follow the lead of a legislator who had gathered enough votes to make the decision go his way, and that was the Legislature breaking its own rules. Well, I was very discouraged by my colleagues and the process that I found myself in, and that even



the process [laughter] could be circumvented, if one had enough power. If one gathered enough votes, one could do *anything*. Even break its own rules. But we also had passed a number of things that had been killed in the Senate, and so, again, that's what caused me to start thinking about running for the Senate, which I then did at the next election.

Bringing closure to this access to information issue: I did run, and I was defeated in 1976. So I am not even back in the Legislature in 1977 to introduce this bill again. But it *was* introduced, and it passed at that session. I believe it was Ty Hilbrecht, the Senator from Clark County, that took the lead on it. I think they took out the major things that they felt would hurt its passage, but we do now have (and have had since 1977) a Biennial Report of the state. It is a large volume put together that is a picture of state government and a statistical abstract of the state.

These are not the kinds of things that grab the general public [laughter] as being *critical* to success of state government. But this was one of the kinds of things that I just really felt strongly about in terms of process and access to information. I felt really good about the things that I did in that arena, even though they weren't politically that sexy. [laughter]



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## LOSING SENATE ELECTION: NEW DIRECTIONS

*It sounds like what you're describing is a sense that there was some power over in the Senate that was keeping you from doing some of the things you wanted to do.*

No question that I *definitely* had this feeling. We had passed a lot of the legislative reform package, and it got killed in the Senate. Then this incident that I just had here, and I just felt that maybe I should go for the Senate to try to balance out the kind of power that was being used over there.

Now, it wasn't going against anyone specific, because in my district at that point in time, you ran with a pack of people in a multi-seat district for the Senate. It was state Senate District 3. It had seven Senators representing the whole metropolitan area—about 100,000 people. They ran in staggered terms—four one year, three the next. So you didn't single out a person to go after. You just put your hat in the ring, so to speak, for the state Senate, and you hoped that you came out in the top . . . in 1976, it was in the top four; and in 1978, it

was in the top three. So I didn't have anyone in mind. I just wanted to get one of those seats.

I found I was in a really totally different world, campaign-wise, and I realized all of that too late. One could not simply go door-to-door, as I'd done in the Assembly districts, and have your supporters go door-to-door. All of a sudden, you now had fourteen Assembly districts to cover [laughter] which would make up seven Senate districts, because there were two Assemblymen for each Senator. You had to go with television ads. You had to go with the big party circuit. You had to "see and be seen." You had to go stand at the gate when the electrical workers went into the power plant at 6:00 a.m. in the morning. It was *that* kind of campaigning, which was totally different than what I had done with my friends in my district. It took more money. The endorsements were more important, because you couldn't reach everybody personally.

Generally, if I reached people and I could talk with them one-on-one, I got their vote; but now I couldn't do that. So the campaign was, in a way as I think back, a struggle from

the beginning. We had a headquarters outside of my home in an office complex; before, we'd run everything out of my house. We had to have people who would volunteer to be down there all the time. It was a big logistical problem, but we did all that, and we did raise enough money to go on television.

My television ads were horrible. [laughter] I knew when we were doing them that they were not going to be good, and I just was powerless to kind of figure out what else to do. They were artificial. They were canned, and here I am still having my problem speaking, and before cameras was one of those times. Of course, anyone who does television wants you to have a script. Well, a script was the absolute last thing I wanted. I'd try to avoid that, and, oh, it was just agony! We did one.

Mary Gojack, in the 1975 session, had been in the Senate. That was another thing that probably influenced me (as I think back) to go for the Senate, because she had *immediately* moved from the Assembly to the Senate and was there. Now, Sue Wagner had come in, by the way, in 1975 and sat where Mary had sat the time before. This was, as we look back, not a good thing for Sue because by this time I was labeled. Here was this new legislator, fresh and pure and all this stuff, sitting by Jean Ford. And, of course, we were both Republicans, too, so we were looked at as double trouble. She didn't have a fair shake from the beginning of that session, because she was sitting next to me, and we obviously agreed on a lot of things. But she overcame that very well. [laughter] And here was Mary over in the Senate, and that was when the three of us really got together and did a lot of fun things together and worked on a lot of the same things.

One of the big issues Mary started was taking the sales tax off of food. She lost in the 1975 session in getting that on, and it

became an issue that one could campaign for or against. I was for taking the sales tax off of food. So we did this commercial in which we are in our carport of our house with the trunk of our car open, and there are bags of groceries, and I am standing by the bags of groceries looking at the camera and saying something inane like, "I believe in taking the sales tax off of food." I mean, it was horrible. It just was *canned*. It was artificial. I'm sure I didn't do it very well, because I was scared to death that I would stutter. It just wasn't an effective ad. We had about three like that. They were all on different issues, but I cringe every time I think about them. Fortunately, we didn't have enough money that they ran a lot, but that was my advertising campaign.

We had some good print material. We had a tabloid that year that showed all my record in the Assembly. The campaign was active, and I had many, many supporters by now in both parties, but I also had enemies by now. I had started taking positions on lots of bills. You never can please everyone, and the women's issue things were coming to the foreground—the Equal Rights Amendment. I made a *careful* statement about why I was for it and tried to alleviate some of the fears and myths, but in the final analysis, I lost the election, and so I think it's better just to go on and maybe talk about why I lost.

In the primary, I can't remember if I led the ticket—I don't think I did. But I did well in the primary, obviously. So now I'm on the ticket for the general. There are four Republicans and four Democrats on the ticket, and then there were probably third-party people on the ticket as well—Independent Party. So there might have been nine or ten people on the general election ballot, and you could vote for four. I came in fifth.

The person who came in fourth was a brand new person to politics, and that was

Bill Hernstadt. He was the owner of an independent television station in southern Nevada and a young, bright, articulate businessman. He filed. I think all the rest of the major people were incumbents—people who had been there before. What I hoped to do was get that fourth seat, and I didn't. He got it instead, and one of the reasons that he got it is that he overspent the limit.

In 1975, we had passed a bill limiting how much we could spend on our campaigns. Now, it later got thrown out by the Supreme Court, but for the 1976 election, it was in force in Nevada. I did not come anywhere close, I think, to raising enough money to be illegal, but he did. He overspent the limit on his campaign, and he had tons of television and tons of last-minute advertising.

One of the reasons that I lost is that he had all of this last-minute name recognition as a new, bright face. Sometimes, in some years, running as a newcomer *against* the system is to your advantage. In a way, I had done that the first time I ran, but now, I was part of the system. See, I'd been in two terms, and I now had people who didn't like some of the things I'd done, where *he* could say, "And we need to change this and this and this." You don't know whether he's going to do it or not, but he's a new, bright face, and he had enough money to do it early and often. That was one of the reasons that he won.

Another is that I did not let go of my own campaign, in terms of running it, soon enough. I *loved* organizing campaigns. [laughter] I loved organizing my *own* campaigns. I had done it very successfully twice. This time, when I was seeing that the headquarters was properly put together and helping do the publications and organize the precinct walking, I should have been doing other things, and I should have had other people doing that. I should have had someone else

calling the shots on running the campaign instead of me.

Another reason that I lost is that truly, the Republicans were not real excited about my running, and by this time, it was more important that you get party support of some kind.

*It wasn't when you first started?*

Right. I mean, they didn't even *know* me hardly, because I had been active in the League and not in the Republican Party. But by now they knew who I was, and they were not real enamored with the kinds of issues that I took up, for the most part. I'm talking about the party leaders. Actually, I recall toward the end of the campaign where the mayor—who served in office as a non-partisan but, in fact, was a Republican by party affiliation—Mayor Oran Gragson, just simply did not support me for re-election. He supported an opponent of mine. So I was getting these messages from the Republicans that they were sitting on their hands, or they weren't going to push that people vote for me as much.

Part of that was that I had become very visible in the Equal Rights Amendment issue. I was willing to talk about the Equal Rights Amendment. I was willing to *debate* people who were against it. I just took on this whole aura of a woman that was involved in the women's movement, maybe to the detriment of being interested in other things. You know, the majority of women in Nevada (or men) were not at that point in their thinking. All of that together, I think, led to my defeat.

*How was it for you personally?*

It was one of the most devastating things in my life. Oh, I just can't tell you how devastated I was! I had the feeling the last few



weeks that I probably was not going to make it. It was just a really awful, gnawing feeling that we weren't going to make it. And then election night came, and we didn't make it. The protocol is that you make the rounds of the television stations or the radio stations, or they come to you, and it was awful.

And another reason that I lost, to some degree, was that my really strong supporters didn't think I could lose, and so a lot of them worked on other campaigns. They really thought I did not need sustained help. I'm sure I gave them that feeling, and so a lot of these people were devastated, too. I mean, there were a *lot* of people surprised.

I could feel that it was coming, but most people really did not. Now, Bob Brown was *not* available during this campaign. He had gone on to becoming editor of a newspaper by then, or something. I honestly can't remember the key players in running the advertising and all that. I have to go back to my files and look at that, but Bob Brown was not there.

I do recall one of the people who came by to see me, who was really surprised, was Bob List. I was at my home, and so he came to my home that night to really give me condolences, even though philosophically we weren't always on the same wavelength. But he did come and tell me how sorry he was. The next morning, you know, one of the first persons to call me was Zack Taylor, I remember. He was a *very* powerful man in the business community—in the Chamber of Commerce and in that whole world that I really didn't fit into that much—but he had truly been a supporter of mine largely because we agreed on consolidation of government. He called about 7:30 in the morning and just said, "I can't believe it, and I'm devastated that you lost." All that did was trigger me into a total collapse of tears and I was that way for two days. I mean, I could not talk with anyone.

Carla had come home from college to be there for the victory. I think she'd come to spend two or three days, and we were all together. Sam and I had to take her back to the airport the next day to go back to school. I could not get out of the car and even say goodbye to her. I was doubled-up in the back seat, just in tears.

My whole life had come to an end, right then, at that point, [laughter] because I knew that I was a good legislator. I knew that I was a full-time legislator, and all of a sudden, I was nobody. I was not going to be allowed to continue in that role that I loved. I knew I was doing a good job, and I wanted to do more. I liked what it did for me personally, in the way I felt about myself and everything. All of a sudden, I was out. It just *really* took a couple of days to even be able to talk with anybody, and then I recovered.

*What helped you recover?*

Well, [laughter] that's hard to say. Certainly people that cared and that were genuinely sorry. We had to go do all that horrible stuff of closing your campaign office and filing reports and all that, which was agony. But people were there to help, and I knew it wasn't the end. I gathered myself together and said, "This is not the end of the world. You know, there are other things in life."

I can't tell you when or where, but I recovered fairly soon from my defeat. Lots of people later said it was how I handled my loss that really made me look good, when I then moved on to do other things. So this crumpled-up woman in the back of the car, crying. . . fortunately, no one but my daughter and my husband saw, and that didn't last too long. I was able to see that I could still apply my love for government, and my love for public process, and my love for organizing

in different ways—go to graduate school, put on workshops for organizations I belonged to, and that type of thing.

In 1976, during the year, I had started a couple of things in the community. One, I'd started taking some graduate classes at the university in public administration. Part of this whole growing process around this time was that I was beginning to be aware that I might want to go to work "for pay" at some time. I knew I would not be in the Legislature forever. I was gaining more confidence in myself as a person.

I might want to work for money. That was another part of the women's movement that was going on then—that you deserved to get paid for what you were doing. And so what would I want to do? Before that I'd sold cards in the stationery store and done that motivational research interviewing kind of thing. But I loved government. My whole *being* now had come from the League and serving in the Legislature as a public person, so studying public administration—about process, about financial administration, about personnel—seemed like a logical thing, whether I ever earned any money from it or not.

I entered the graduate program at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. They had their public administration courses they offered starting at 5:00 or 5:30 in the evening, so almost everybody there was working in government of some kind. They were working for county or city or the Sheriff's Department or whatever.

I also had taught in the spring of 1976 a course for Continuing Education at the university on women in politics. It was in February and March. It was eight sessions. Now, I was still a legislator then; that was before the election, so I was still Assemblywoman.

And by the way, all my letters and everything said Assemblyman. I was still

using the term Assemblyman. I said early on that I was going to fight my battles on bigger issues than whether I should be called Assemblywoman or Assemblyman. Later when I was in the Senate it didn't matter. It was generic, but I moved over to the idea that female members of the Assembly should be called Assemblywomen.

I put together this course, and it was sponsored by the Department of Political Science at the university through Continuing Education. It was called "Involving Nevada Women in Politics and Public Affairs." It was co-sponsored by A.A.U.W., the Consolidated Students at the university, the Junior League, the League of Women Voters, and the Nevada Federation of Business and Professional Women in southern Nevada. It was eight sessions on Tuesday evenings, from 7:15 to 10:00. We first had scheduled it in another room, and 150 people signed up for that course. So that tells you something about where we were at that point in time. It was just the beginning of awareness—of people being suddenly intrigued by, "What is this world of women in politics?"

There were about three men and the rest women. One man was named Bill Middleton, and he remained a *loyal* supporter forever. [laughter] I don't know if he's still living in southern Nevada now or not. He was a retired teacher. I think he was retired at that time. And his wife was very supportive, too.

I brought in speakers. We talked about women's role in politics and government—the power structure in Nevada. I was *very* candid. I now had this list of things that I liked to talk about the Legislature. Short of calling names, I talked about the struggle for power. This was all new to people, and for a woman to talk about the struggle for power was unusual, but the reception I got was *very* positive from people.

I first started to realize that I was a role model for others during this time that I started teaching. This class had a lot to do with that. It was so overwhelmingly successful—they had to move it to this other big auditorium, and people just sat on every word. They just *loved* it. There are people who have come up to me in the last month and told me that they ran for office because they were in this class.

Sue Smith, a Reno City Councilwoman, came up to me Saturday night and said, “I ran for office because I took *your* Nevada Women Winning Political Campaigns Workshop back in 1985.” I led three workshops like that up here in the early 1980s sponsored by the Caucus, and Sue was a part of that. There are other women who served, who took those workshops. But it wasn’t just me; I brought others in. I was just the organizer of it.

*But you began to have a sense that you could have an impact on individual lives?*

Oh, *absolutely*. Absolutely.

I talked about the power structure in Nevada. Is acquiring power a laudable goal? Problems women face in the world of politics. (Here I used the Center for American Women in Politics findings.) Getting appointed to boards and commissions—that’s how I started. I tell everybody else, “Go get on a board or a commission. You learn the system. You get a title. You become important. You can make a difference in that arena. Then you have something to put on your campaign material.” I had people on boards and commissions come in and talk—women who had been appointed.

Meaningful opportunities for policy-making, elective office; I had people in office come in and talk. The big decision to run, winning elections—what does it take? We did a kind of a mini-workshop on all the things it

takes to win an election—money, volunteers, research issues, media, precinct organization.

Where do we go from here? I talked about how they could carry their knowledge to others, their sharing a personal commitment to future involvement. We almost lit candles and said, “I will go do *this*. I will make A.A.U.W. have three meetings on women in politics,” or everybody made promises to themselves as to what they were going to do. They evaluated the course, which was just *incredibly* successful.

Well, six months later, I was out of a job as a legislator. But doing things like this was an avenue that I could go back to—leading workshops for organizations, remaining in the public eye. You know, once you’ve been elected to public office in this state, you are always treated differently, even if you lose. All the best people generally have lost one election, so I wasn’t any different than anyone else. I mean, there *is* a kind of a respect for you that is a residual that continues forever. There are still at least ten people in the state that insist on calling me Senator every time I see them, even though it’s been fifteen years since I was in the state Senate. You still have doors open to you. Now, the fact you just lost an election, it kind of dies down there for awhile, you know, and you’re not as eager to go test the waters.

But teaching the classes, I had enjoyed that so much and that led to my teaching another *major* Continuing Education class, while the Legislature was going on in 1977. I moved into starting to do graduate work full-time. I became a T.A. [teaching assistant] to Dr. Al Johns in the Political Science Department.

The workshop that I put on from January to April in 1977 was again a *really incredible* thing. We did it at U.N.L.V. It was called “Nevada Legislative Action ‘77,” and I had two sessions of it going. It was so popular that we

had one during the day and one at night—9:30 a.m. to noon or 7:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. It was once a week for almost three months—twelve sessions. I taught everything I knew about the Legislature, while we watched the 1977 Legislature operate from Las Vegas. I had lobbyists there in the class as well as people who knew nothing about the Legislature. I had all kinds of people who wanted *my* insights into how the process worked, and I loved sharing it with them.

I lined up a telephone connection where we could call Carson during the class. We had a speaker phone right in the class. Every week, both morning and night, we talked with either a legislator or a lobbyist or a staff person in Carson City about what went on that day. That was *one* of the elements of the class. We would also have commentary on the significant legislative actions of the week and brief reviews of resource materials that people could use. The whole thing was divided into an introductory overview, then historical anecdotes. I had a film that had been produced by the National Conference of State Legislatures.

I broke them into policy groups, so those who wanted to talk about environment part of each time talked about environment and what was happening, and then those who wanted to talk about education, and those who wanted to talk about welfare. We talked about bill drafting and political alignments that influence action—like lobbyists, media, the Governor, the federal government, money. What part the state budget plays, the role of leadership, the use of power, openness in government, the whole issue of ethics and campaign finance. Oversight—how does the Legislature have oversight over the executive branch? Legislative activities during the interim.

We didn't have a class on March 31, because we traveled to Carson City. Not

everybody could come, but those who could went to the Legislature. We flew, but as a group. Probably twenty-five went to Carson, enough that we had a presence there, and it was *Jean Ford's class*.

Now, I, too, had been to the Legislature by that time, lobbying for libraries and the Chamber of Commerce, so I was up there three or four times that session for certain issues, and that's very common. There are *lots* of ex-legislators in the session as lobbyists.

*Were you hired to do those, or were you doing it on a volunteer basis?*

I was not paid. I was not paid by either group as I recall, no. I was part of legislative lobbying committees.

The Chamber, I really enjoyed that because it was unanticipated by a lot of people. A lot of people felt that the business community would automatically *never* support me. People like Zack Taylor did support me and took a lot of flak for it. He saw that when Jimmy Cashman's airplane flew up with the big guys, that I was on that plane with *him*. I'd gained some other credibility by being with those people and we agreed on a number of issues.

One thing you learned is that you don't write anybody off—*anybody*, you know. Lobbyists that you disagree with, at some point in time, you'll agree with them and you need to work together. Legislators that you can't stand for one reason or another—you can't write them off. Someday you're going to need their vote or you're going to end up agreeing on something. You keep your options open always. That's what I was doing. I was bouncing back, I guess, and working with the groups that cared about the issues I worked on, and then sharing this whole information about the process with whomever would

come. It was hard to go up, but I did. And I found other ways to use my time and still make a difference.

*How was it for you personally, when you went back as a lobbyist, to go back and know that you weren't serving?*

Oh, well, it's hard. It's hard. Oh, yes, because you've lost an election, and there was Bill Hernstadt sitting in what should be my seat. But philosophically, he and I agreed on most things, [laughter] so from that standpoint, the votes didn't matter that much. But just the whole aura of not being there was hard.

*Did you end up working with him on some of the things you did agree on?*

Oh, yes. *Absolutely.* Absolutely, and I'm sure that there are a lot of other people he would rather he had beat than me. [laughter] I mean, he was a loose cannon. No one liked Bill Hernstadt. I developed a real rapport with *most* legislators, but Bill Hernstadt didn't care whether he developed a rapport with them. He was his own man, and he stood his ground, and I don't think he was re-elected. I think he served only the one term. He was prone to get up and talk, you know, really almost filibuster on the floor, which the other legislators—not that there weren't several others that did that, too—but when he did it, their eyes glazed over, and they would sleep.

The other thing that happened is that right then—I think within weeks of the election—this appointed steering committee to plan the first-ever Nevada Women's Conference was called together to organize. I was elected Chair, because I didn't have any job. I was the one that had some free time. All the other people on it were in office, like

Frankie Sue Del Papa (Well, Frankie Sue then was on the Board of Regents or maybe she was working in a law practice.) Sue Wagner was on the committee. Mary Gojack was on the committee. Mary Frazzini, I think, was on the committee; she was no longer in the Legislature at that time. But everybody was living busy lives.

We needed to organize, and we'd been appointed by our Congressional delegation to put on this conference, and we had \$25,000 to do it. Mary Forrester—who had been one of my most *loyal* supporters forever from the days of doing workshops on “White Racism—Black Power,” who had worked on my campaigns, who had been part of my staff on the campaign that I lost, and then ended up helping run the campaign in 1978—she became the secretary of the committee. As a team, we gathered all these people together that we needed to help make this happen, and we started organizing a women's conference. So I was very busy.

*You had some conclusions about what this loss meant, and what you were doing with your life at that time?*

Well, it did make me stop and think about a lot of things. [laughter] These two courses—the one on women in politics and the one on the legislative process that I did for Continuing Education—*really* showed me that I could be a teacher in a more formal way, and that adult education, non-credit kinds of things (although I think people could get credit for these as well) was an avenue for my energy. I had been doing that in an informal way, through the League and others and even through campaigning—talking with public groups—but I began to realize that I could do it in a more formal way, and I could get paid for it. That emerged as a kind of an idea for future career kinds of opportunities.



The work on the degree was *very* exciting. I loved going back to college, and particularly when not being elected [laughter] gave me a whole new block of time. I loved getting a study carrel in the library that was mine and just *immersing* myself in academic theory about why all these things I'd been doing in real life were supposed to happen.

I was taking a class on organizational theory, which was taught by Dina Titus, who is currently the most powerful woman in the Nevada state Senate. She had just moved to Las Vegas that year from the South as a new political science professor. I was one of her first students in organizational theory, and I *loved* that class on how groups form, and what makes them do what they do, and how can you influence them. I was also greatly influenced by Bruce Carroll, a UNLV professor, who taught constitutional law and administrative law.

Some opportunities came up, actually, to apply for some jobs, and I didn't know if I'd ever run again. I was not bitter. I was never bitter. I was just sad that I wasn't where I belonged, you know. [laughter] But I found there were *other* ways to use these same skills. But I did start thinking about getting this degree. I was now going to get this degree in about a year, and what would I want to do as a job, or whatever? And so I applied for a couple of things.

I look back, and I just really laugh at this. In April of 1978—and that would have been the last semester of working on my master's and before I decided to run for the Senate, in this two-year kind of hiatus when I was out of the Legislature—I applied to be the Presidential Assistant for Development at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Brock Dixon was the acting President. I have the letter that I sent respectfully requesting their consideration for this newly created position.

I did get an interview. I sent samples of my writing and items related to a fundraising, because this was really a fundraising position. It was ultimately given to a man named Lyle Rivera, who to this day still has that position, but I was given an interview.

I remember going up to this interview in the President's office at the university. I had written a totally separate resumé geared to my ability to raise money—had just taken all the pieces out of everything else and written this resumé that I thought would really make me look good. All these people knew me, because I was an ex-legislator, public official. And in the course of the interview, they were asking me “what if” kinds of questions, and I realized as I was in that interview that I didn't want to do that at *all*. As I answered those questions, I realized by looking at myself that being a director of development for anybody was *not my cup of tea*. That wasn't my strength—maybe going back to the whole issue of asking people for money. I wasn't that kind of salesman. I could sell ideas. I could sell a lot of other things, but selling people to give up their money on a regular basis was just not what I was good at.

I had made myself look *great* on this piece of paper, but the interview itself told me. Now, they didn't call me back for the second interview either, so maybe I didn't do all that well in the interview, but it told me I didn't want that kind of job. That was kind of revealing. I was learning to be selective. [laughter] There are certain strengths you have, and you ought to stay with those strengths.

The other job I applied for was Assistant City Manager for the City of Las Vegas, and I felt that I was being *very brash* to do that. I mean, this was a wild idea—that anyone would consider me as an Assistant City Manager. I didn't even live in the city for one



thing. They had a City Manager, a man named Russell Dorn, who had just come, and he had the right to put together his personal staff. We had met, and I put together an elaborate thing for him as to how I could be of value as his Assistant City Manager, and I don't think I even got to the interview stage on that. That's something I *would* have been interested in, because it fit right in with the administrative side of government which I liked.

I don't have any recollection, but I'm sure having just lost an election had some effect on all that. It has an effect on what people do. You know, they're going to be nice to you, and a lot of people are going to be really friendly and everything, but to *hire* you is another thing. What baggage do you bring to that position as a loser? So I applied for those two positions. I didn't get to first base on either one of them.

In the meantime, the women's conference started taking all my time, along with graduate work. That was *all* I did—the women's conference and graduate work—late in 1976 and all of 1977.

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## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR

When I lost the election, one of the key things that took my time was working on my master's degree, and the other opportunity that arose right at that same time was to be appointed to this International Women's Year Coordinating Committee for the Nevada conference. The fact that I was the unemployed one made me the logical one to be the Chair of that group.

There were three aspects of this whole thing. One is the conference itself, which was held in June 1977 in Las Vegas. It took us about a year to plan it and to bring it off. There were a number of committee meetings. There were about twenty-five women appointed to this Coordinating Committee by the Congressional delegation. There was a group of us that knew each other, like Mary Gojack, Sue Wagner, Frankie Sue Del Papa, and Barbara Bennett [former City of Reno mayor], who were *moving* in the political world. There were a group of Native American women that we did not know at all. There were some black women, who were working in kind of grass roots, war-on-poverty issues; some of us knew

them and some didn't. And then there were some women *none* of us knew. So first we had to get acquainted with each other.

Our way was paid. We had this \$25,000 budget—a significant amount—which went toward bringing us together to form committees to create this conference. We got to know each other, and we broke into sub-committees, and we planned a statewide women's conference. It was held at the Las Vegas Convention Center on June 17th through the 19th. Our goals were to recognize the contributions of women of both the state and the nation; to examine the role of women in Nevada's economic, social, cultural, and political development; to identify barriers that prevent Nevada women from participating fully and equally in all aspects of Nevada life; to seek consensus by which the barriers could be removed; and to promote friendly relations and cooperation between women of all nations in the strengthening of world peace. Now, this was initially sponsored by the United Nations Decade for Women, so this international flavor came out of that.

Identifying the barriers that prevent Nevada women from participating fully and equally—certainly, the Equal Rights Amendment was one of those, but from the beginning we did not want that to be the overriding issue. We didn't want to come to a meeting just to fight over the E.R.A. We wanted to talk about things that were Nevada-based, that were individual laws or obstacles. We wanted to learn about the contributions of all women in the state. We had nationally-known speakers that came. We had a pre-conference seminar on becoming a successful businesswoman that was sponsored by the Office of Minority Business Enterprise of the U.S. Department of Commerce, and that was *extremely* successful. We had exhibits and demonstrations by organizations from all over the state. We had a film festival going on—all kinds of films that could be utilized by people in the workplace or in women's organizations. We had a health clinic open house. Then there was a political atmosphere, because when we got done we were supposed to have elected twelve delegates from Nevada to the national conference in Houston. So there was a process of people being nominated and a nominating committee, a ballot, and an election time.

The first night, we also had something called a "speak out," which was simply an opportunity for anyone to air their views and experiences regarding women's issues. The panel members were a group of state and local officials. That evening ended with the opening plenary session. As the conference coordinator, I presided over that session, as well as the closing business meeting on Sunday. We had some pomp and circumstance—a call to the colors, and, of course, they were carried by women—and a welcome to Clark County by Thalia Dondero, who was Chair of the Board of County Commissioners at that time. (Here was one

of our own in a position of power.) Harriet Trudell spoke as Special Assistant to Governor O'Callaghan in southern Nevada. We had the woman chairing the Utah conference speak, and she was a guest of ours at this conference—a woman named Jan Tyler. We became good friends and corresponded for a long time. And then representatives from our Congressional delegation.

The keynote speaker that night was a woman named Carol Burris from Washington, D.C., whose title of her speech was "Putting It All Together." She gave kind of a national perspective to what was happening, after which we had some informal social hour.

On Saturday, we had two times for workshops relating to women and the world of work. One was from 10:15 a.m. to noon—a kind of a nice block of time. Someone led one on "Running Your Own Business." Someone else did "Skilled Crafts and Trades." Someone else did "Homemaking." Someone else did "Communications and Public Relations." There were about twelve of those.

The keynote speaker that morning in a plenary session was Madeline Mixer from the U.S. Women's Bureau of the Department of Labor in San Francisco. She just retired a couple of years ago, and we worked together on many projects over the years. After Madeline, we had another speaker from Nevada, Jesse Emmett, who was a businesswoman in Las Vegas who kind of related more to what was happening to women here in the state.

We also had music at each of these sessions, which we called "Sounds of Harmony." We had different musical groups sing, and that morning we had the Regional Ladies Chorus led by Lucy Bunker, which was the chorus of the LDS Church. We had deliberately asked them to be a part of the program (and they did accept—about eighty women, I think, in this chorus) because we were wanting

to rise above or beyond the Equal Rights Amendment fight. Most of the LDS women were opposed to E.R.A., whether from their own determination or what they were being told by the leaders of the church. But they did come and that really helped all of us to come together into a larger whole, and we were really pleased that they participated.

Frankie Sue Del Papa presided over that opening plenary session that morning. She was the Vice Chair of this conference.

At lunch Maya Miller, who was also on this committee, introduced our special guest, which was Gloria Steinem. Now, at *that* point, Gloria Steinem was *really* a very controversial, nationally-known feminist figure in the United States. She had started *Ms.* magazine around that time, and she gave the keynote address. I distinctly recall when the Program Planning Committee came back to the Coordinating Committee and presented her name as one they wanted to invite. In my mind, I thought that was just *too* radical—that we were just going to ask for trouble if we had someone like Gloria Steinem at our conference, which just shows that I was *still* back there, *way* back there, [laughter] pretty conservative in my approach to what was going on with the women's movement. I mean, I believed in the E.R.A., but Gloria Steinem I just wasn't sure about.

We had, I think, around 1100 people at that luncheon, and I think all but about five gave her a standing ovation. People were standing on their chairs at the end—myself included. She was just *fabulous*, and so, so soft yet powerful in the way she spoke—so human, so reasonable—that she just allayed any fears I had about *her* as a rabble-rouser, I guess. I've heard her many times since and been in rather small gatherings with her and each time I've been so impressed with her effectiveness. As

I have moved on, I have become much more radical in my thinking as to what the answers to all of these issues are. But on that particular day, I just recall being *relieved* that the whole audience accepted her, and it was a quite successful part of the conference.

*Do you recall any particular points that she made that day?*

Just overall, she talked about the role of women. I'm sure she talked about the necessity for us to act, for us to make a commitment to dealing with some of these issues, but she did it in such a reasonable way that you couldn't deny. It's like what I've read in the history, like Susan B. Anthony back there urging that women be given the vote, and Alf Doten saying in his editorial, "Who can argue with this woman?" You know, that's kind of where I was with Gloria Steinem on that day. How could I argue with her? What she said was real and was right.

In the afternoon, we had other workshops. I'm looking at a list of them: Child Care Alternatives, Contemporary Women in Crime, Health and Nutrition, Marriage Enrichment, Money Matters, The Rights and Benefits of Older Women (very broad), Single Parenting, Strengthening Family Relationships. So this wasn't all just on politics and the law. It had to do with living and being a woman.

The attendance was just incredible. We had 1700 people registered altogether. I don't think they were all ever there at the same time, but we were just pushing the walls in all of these rooms.

*Is that what you had expected, or was it beyond what you expected?*

It was beyond what we expected, I think, and the logistics of making all that work were

considerable. We had a *wonderful* woman who came into her own as a master organizer at this conference, named Helen Myers, who was in charge of arrangements. She just took that on like everything, the whole scheduling of rooms and the P.A. systems and the security, and all those things that you have to have to put on a major conference. None of us had ever put on a major conference like this. It was a real collective effort. Fortunately, we got some really skilled people in the right places, so that it all worked.

*Like Helen, who knew logistics.*

Right. Or she learned quick. [laughter]

We had a festival on Saturday evening, and it was a performing arts review—poetry readings, children's theater, gymnastics, belly dancing. We must have just put out a call and said, "Who wants to perform?" And then we arranged like a three-ring circus where this could happen.

The balloting started for the national delegates in the evening on Saturday and continued on through Sunday morning. We also had "A Time for Reflection"—music, spoken and unspoken thoughts—which was kind of our acknowledgment that we were meeting on Sunday morning and many people weren't getting to go to the church of their choice. It was kind of an ecumenical, non-denominational time of pausing and reflecting. Then we had another whole round of workshops related to personal growth and leadership skills. We had *three* going on assertiveness training, all at the same time. Also, Leading Discussions, How to Raise Money, How to Conduct a Meeting, Lobbying Effectively, Mind and Body Working Together, Organizing Coalitions, Political Campaign Techniques, Working With the Media.

The closing plenary, Frankie Sue and I presided over that together. There were resolutions that came out of the group that were discussed, and they announced the election results for the national delegates. One of the *national* International Women's Year commissioners, who was assigned to Nevada, closed with a kind of "Where do we go from here?" speech, and then we gave a Nevada response.

The people who were elected delegates, after the adjournment of the conference, met that afternoon. This was in June, and we were to be delegates to the national conference in November.

*And you were one of them?*

Yes. I was elected one of the delegates. Actually, I chaired the delegation to Houston. There was a lot of protocol that went on between that time and November, a lot of work we were supposed to do to bring certain things to that conference in Houston.

The election process itself had some real sparks of controversy. Some states around the country had started having their conferences by around March or April, and then others really didn't have them until very close to the November time; this was up to each state as to when they would hold their state conference. We were kind of in the middle, being about the middle of June. There were national newsletters coming out now from the International Women's Year office in Washington about what was happening in all these conferences.

Just before our conference, there began a *really* strong trend where certain forces in certain states really tried to take over the conference and make it an anti-woman conference and make it anti-E.R.A.—I

mean, just to not let the conference do what it was supposed to do. These were, for the most part in the states that we were aware of, members of the L.D.S. Church and other more conservative religious groups. It was an outgrowth of their concerns about the Equal Rights Amendment, but a lot of other things, too. I mean, there just began a backlash to the women's movement, which *I* was now becoming a part of. The anti ERA, anti woman side was very discouraging to me. In some states, they rallied people and organized and basically took *over* the conference. In the state of Utah they did that. Thousands of women in Utah arrived at the conference site not having registered—registering that day and coming with their own slate of officers and electing their anti-E.R.A., anti-woman women to go to Houston to represent that state. Several states had that experience before we met, so we were getting really anxious about what was happening in Nevada—if we were going to have that same kind of thing. We had, as I described, *tried* to do some things to neutralize any potential of that, like inviting the L.D.S. Chorus to sing.

I had met, when this first started, with Senator Gibson who was one of the leaders of the L.D.S. Church and made it very clear to him that we were not wanting to have a confrontation—that we really *wanted* L.D.S. women to come. We wanted to learn what we had in common. I think that really did help, because when certain people started trying to organize toward the end, it was too late for it to be very effective. But we did have an influx of strangers—people who had not registered in advance—on Sunday morning who wanted to register and vote, and they had a slate to vote for of people that had been nominated but were not on the official nominating list. (People could write them in.) But it was not enough to affect the result.

*Do you remember how large a group that was?*

Oh, it was probably two or three hundred.

*It was a pretty good sized.*

Oh, yes. We knew, and we were scared. We were *really* scared. We didn't know but that, when we got up on Sunday morning, there would just be buses and buses and buses outside the convention center with women having ridden all night from Ely or somewhere like that. But it was *much* smaller than it could have been.

There are some really, really funny stories out of all this. Myram Borders was on the Steering Committee. She was a newswoman and is still very active in the state—is now head of the Las Vegas News Bureau. She was in charge of the election, and she had identified poll watchers—people to see that the election went properly. She was the first to see all of this coming on a Sunday morning. One of the people that was a good friend of hers was Beverly Harrell, who at that time was the madam/owner of the Cottontail Ranch, which was a house of prostitution in Esmeralda County. Beverly also had a house in Las Vegas. I can't recall now, but I think Beverly was actually registered at the conference. Anyway, Myram called on her to be a poll watcher. She really wanted her to connect with some of the anti people and divert them from passing out their ballots and all this other stuff. So what really happened is Beverly Harrell, the madam, who at that point was a short, really attractive woman with kind of reddish-blond hair and wearing glasses that were heart-shaped, rose colored—I mean, here is this woman [laughter] in the polling place talking with these anti-E.R.A. men and women, who are there trying to get their people to, hopefully, take over the election.



The stories that Myram has told about this are really hilarious. [laughter]

But they did not turn out sufficient numbers to affect the vote, so Nevada did elect a *pro*-woman slate to go to Houston. Now, there were alternates chosen and some of the alternates were anti. One in particular was Karen Hayes, who at that time was in the Assembly. Her husband had been in the Assembly when I was there and then died, and she was elected to take his place. She was L.D.S. and also, I believe, on the Steering Committee, so she became kind of the informal leader of the anti's. They had to pay their own way to go to Houston, which they did. The rest of us, our way was paid out of this budget that we had.

There were clearly divisions of philosophies and people beginning to feel very strongly about certain issues and taking sides. It wasn't all sweetness and light, but the overall effect of the conference was *very* empowering to anybody who came. I mean, people felt really good about it. They felt good about just basic workshop information they'd gained and the networking. Networking was becoming *the* buzz word of the day, where you learned about people of like interests, and you connected. It was OK to use each other in positive ways to move ahead with your personal goals. A lot of women were moving into the business world and going back to school, and it was just a very exciting time for a lot of women.

*Even things like assertiveness training were really big at that time. We don't hear about it as much now, but some of the workshops that you named were also particular to that time of women's growth.*

Exactly. Exactly.

A very interesting thing happened after the conference that I will never forget. I

was invited to speak to a group in Las Vegas within a couple of weeks of the conference. It was a consciousness-raising group, of which there were *many* in Las Vegas at the time. Some women were doing it as consultants and getting paid to put on these workshops. Some were marriage and family counselors or psychologists, and others were doing it just as a volunteer type of thing. But I went to one of these groups, and they wanted me to talk about the conference and I did talk about the results of it. There was a young woman there—she couldn't have been more than eighteen or nineteen—and I'll never forget her looking at me and saying, "You know, I really wanted to come, but I was afraid to come, and I didn't."

And I said, "Why were you afraid to come to this conference?"

She said, "I couldn't imagine that women could put something like that on, and I didn't want to see it fail."

She couldn't imagine that women had what it took to organize and be in charge of arrangements, and be in charge of food, and be in charge of P.R., and be in charge of registration—that women knew how to do those things. This was a young woman, and she had not seen that happen, and she couldn't imagine that women—just women—could do that alone.

*What a comment on that period of time that you were operating in.*

Right! I was amazed that she felt that way, because I had moved far beyond that at that point. I mean, I *never* was back at that point. But it just showed that there were still women out there who were *very* fearful of asserting themselves and not even feeling that other women could do it.

*No trust in other women to do it?*

That's right. That's right. It was really sad to think that she didn't come because she didn't want to see something fall flat on its face because it was being run by women. I've never forgotten that.

There were three aspects. One of them happened before the conference. A group of us were *really* concerned that we get people from Ely and Elko and other parts of rural Nevada, and we really anticipated that not very many would come from those areas, for a whole range of reasons—being away from families, the cost, the time, but also that out there, even moreso, there was less awareness of what all of this was all about. So we wrote a humanities grant to take a kind of a preview of the conference to those towns as a way of advertising the conference and urging people to come.

In April of 1977, four of us went on the road, and I was part of the team. A woman named Mary Forrester, who had worked for me as a volunteer and now was an active member of the League and had been kind of my secretary through this whole conference thing, acted as the Project Director for this grant.

The other two people were Mary Frazzini, who was a legislator from Reno—a Republican, who had been a real role model of mine back in like the 1971 session. She served on judiciary. Oh, she had such a strong voice and could just get up on the floor and just speak in the Assembly chambers when I was sitting there quaking in my boots. I just *loved* seeing her there. She lost in the 1972 election when I first won, so we never got to serve together, but then she became active in Women's Political Caucus and things relating to senior citizens in Reno. She remained politically active for a long time, so we worked together on a lot of things. Well, in 1977, she was actually

Director of the Reno Senior Citizens Center and a member of the Governor's Committee on the Status of Women. She joined us from the north.

Renée Diamond, who was a member of our Steering Committee and active in the Democratic Women's Club of Clark County, also joined us. So there were the four of us who went in a van, and we traveled the state for four days. On the first day, we went to Tonopah and Carson City, and had programs in both of those towns. We'd stopped in Tonopah at noon, and then were in Carson in the evening—spent the night. The next day we were in Fallon at noon and in Reno that night for a program. The following day, we were in Winnemucca at noon and Elko at night. And the last day, we were in Ely at noon, in Caliente in Lincoln County at the girls' school in the afternoon late, and we got home that night. If you were picturing the state of Nevada, we have made the outer perimeter of the state; we've made a big loop throughout the whole state. I don't know how many miles that is, but it's a lot.

We were like traveling salesmen. In each town, we spoke at a library or a public place. (This was all lined up in advance.) We had either a local woman or some women from Las Vegas or Reno that would join us in that town, as kind of expert guests on the panel.

We talked about three things. First, we talked about women and health: Do women have special health needs that are un-met? What public health services are available? Crisis intervention opportunities? Second, we talked about women in the home: What is the legal status of homemakers in Nevada? How are a homemaker's unsalaried contributions to a home treated? What are the property rights of women in Nevada? And the third was women in the workforce: Why do women work outside the home? Where are women

in the workforce? Is there discrimination in hiring and salary practices? Those were the three topics. We had a short panel discussion, and then an invitation to the audience to get involved in each town that we went to.

We had a display of some women in history that Mary Forrester put together, and that was the first time any of us had really gone back and looked at the women who came before us. It was a whole new world for us then. I really laugh when I think about that now, and where *I've* come on that score.

We'd have audiences anywhere from maybe fifteen in Tonopah to maybe fifty in Reno. Over the course of the four days we saw several hundred people. We left them registration forms and information about the conference and we said, "Now, this is just a little sampler of the kind of thing we're going to do for three days in Las Vegas in June. Come." Some of them did, and those who didn't still felt a part of the process. We really enjoyed doing that and appreciated getting some money from the Humanities Committee to help put that on.

The final thing was the national conference in Houston—*very, very* exciting. I've forgotten how many thousand women were there from all over the country—several. The delegates were based on quotas, based on some complicated formula, so Nevada had twelve. The official delegates totaled four thousand, but there were all of these dignitaries—I think four Presidents' wives were there, all on the stage at the same time, which would have been Ford and Carter, and who else at that point? I can't think who all was in the play at that time. Bella Abzug, Gloria Steinem, Ann Richards, who later became the Governor of Texas but was then a local official in Austin, Texas. Women in Congress.

There were foreign observers, women brought in by the State Department from

Africa and Asia and Europe. I was invited to a special pre-conference meeting sponsored by the State Department. I just couldn't believe it. I was hearing these women from Africa tell about their lives. Like I spent eight hours a day doing my thing at that point in time, which was all kinds of community activism. They spent eight hours a day carrying water from the nearest source to their village. That's what they did, all day long, was carry water. It was just another world for me to touch base with this whole international aspect of women and the need for development in their countries, just for basic survival. That was *very* consciousness-raising for me to be in that kind of atmosphere.

The conference itself was very exciting. There were a number of states that sent real negative delegations, who were there to cause trouble, who didn't buy the whole concept of women's rights. They would try to control the mikes, so there was a lot of parliamentary maneuvering. The Nevada delegation sat right across the aisle from the New York delegation, and the leader of the New York delegation was a woman named Carol Bellamy. At that time she was the Assistant Mayor of New York City and just a really neat, neat woman. We got acquainted, and it was our job to try to maintain control of the microphone—between the Nevada delegation and the New York delegation—so that pro-woman speakers could have access to the microphone. There was a lot of maneuvering on that kind of thing.

*How did you maintain control over it?*

Well, we just did. [laughter]

*Just kept people up there talking?*

That's right, because we kept people on our side in strategic spots. The Oklahoma

delegation sat really near us, and they were very *anti*-abortion, and they were hostile—didn't want to even be friendly to us. The chemistry was just really fascinating.

There was a lot of pageantry. It started with a torch being carried into Houston by runners. Throughout the course of the conference, there was a celebration of the arts. Of course, women in sports were also highlighted. Every aspect of life was addressed in some way and, again, there were some workshops, but as I recall it was mainly this large plenary session.

We came from our various states having had our own conferences, and we brought resolutions from Nevada of the things that we felt strongly about. The whole idea that domestic violence was a reality was becoming more public—something you talked about. And, of course, discrimination in the workplace. The need to help poor women gain enough money to be able to survive and take care of their children.

The rights of lesbians to not be looked at as abnormal, and that they had legal rights was an issue that was addressed. The anti's particularly tried to make that look like it was dominant—like everybody there was a lesbian or an E.R.A. advocate—and that simply wasn't true. But you can manipulate the press; you can create things that make things look that way.

So there was a lot of tension, but the overriding feeling was one of "Wow!" you know. [laughter] Here are all these women from all over the country, being observed by the *world*, coming together to address the needs of women, and this was the first time something like that ever happened in the United States on as broad a scale.

Now, you go back to the old suffrage conventions, which in their day were similar, but due to the nature of women's history

being kind of *invisible*, very few of us had any knowledge of the women who had come before us. So we really thought we were the first to do anything.

*You didn't have the historical perspective?*

We didn't. We didn't.

*Plus, I'm really struck by the fact the suffragists worked for the vote. They didn't have the luxury of working on the issues, because they just didn't even have the vote.*

That's right. That's right.

*Here this whole group of women was able to go the next step up and confront the issues.*

Right, and we did. There's a whole book about an inch thick that is the report on the conference called *To Form a More Perfect Union*. I have several copies of that in my office, and we have them in the archives. Actually, there's a whole full report on this conference at the university archives in Reno. Someone did an oral history with Frankie Sue Del Papa about our conference and the Houston conference, and it is at Special Collections [in the University of Nevada, Reno library] along with a cubic foot of files on the Nevada conference, our resolutions that we arrived at, and then what we took to Houston and what came out of Houston.

What came out of Houston was almost like a national women's bill of rights. It addressed *every* aspect from handicaps, to the arts, to the workplace. Many delegations went back to their states and created follow-up commissions. Most states by that time had a commission on the status of women in their state, where they would address the findings that came out of Houston and that came out of

their individual states. Nevada did not. What we did was come back and jump *right* back into the Equal Rights Amendment fight again, because that's where we were in Nevada. We were still one of those unratified states that all the rest of the states hoped would become ratified; that was still the number one issue for us to work on, and it took all of our energy.

Let's see, now. This was in November 1977—the session in which the E.R.A. had tied when some of the legislators had promised both sides their vote on the E.R.A. had already happened earlier that year. So now the Equal Rights Amendment was going to be on the ballot in 1978. We had to come back and start working on that campaign to get people to vote “yes” on the Equal Rights Amendment on the ballot.

Our Governors in those years were never enamored with the idea of creating a commission on the status of women. So that did not happen, and this state did not develop a broad-based response to the National Women's Conference, because we were too focused on trying to do something about the E.R.A. And then when we lost that, just a lot of women kind of gave up. They just had spent the maximum amount of energy that they could spend on this kind of thing for awhile. Many states created very effective organizations that still exist today, but organizations in Nevada—like A.A.U.W. or the League or Business and Professional Women or Planned Parenthood—would each take on the issues that most interested them. There was still a lot of grass roots activism, but it was not organized at the state level, actually, until the mid-nineties when the Nevada Women's Lobby was created to be the organizing umbrella coalition of all these groups who cared about women's and children's issues. It is a very effective force today.

*But by missing out on that chance, at that point in 1977, it took twenty years for this to become organized?*

There were always bits and pieces of things happening with all these organizations. Plus, the Republican and Democratic parties, to some extent, all took turns working on various issues, but there was never a state-sponsored group like a Governor's commission on the status of women.

Now, finally in recent years, largely through the efforts of people like Helen Foley, who, by the way, was a colleague of mine . . . I don't think I have mentioned Helen at all. Helen was my intern when I was a freshman legislator. She was a student at the university, and, of course, she came from the *very* distinguished Foley family that started in Goldfield and then came to Las Vegas—lots of attorneys and federal judges. John Foley, her uncle, was in the Senate when I was in the Assembly. Anyway, Helen was my intern, and she went on to work for Senator Cannon and eventually came back as the youngest woman legislator—first serving in the Assembly and then in the Senate. She ran for U.S. Congress and lost, and since then has worked as a lobbyist with a P.R. firm in Las Vegas. But she has been very active in a lot of these issues and organizations.

Helen, in the early nineties, went to bat for getting a commission on the status of women created. We now have one in this state. In my opinion, it is weak. It does not have a lot of funding. One of the problems with creating a commission like that, officially, is that the Governor and the Legislature feel obligated to create a balanced group, so they end up putting the enemy on the commission. They end up putting on anti people, who do not want to address some of these issues on the status of women. They lobby to have



their voice represented, but you neutralize [laughter] . . . I mean, you set up something to fail, almost. You set up a stand-off kind of situation.

*So all they can do is oppose each other?*

They kind of spar with each other. Now, I have to hand it to Frankie Sue Del Papa and others that have been on this commission, where they did rise above. They realized they weren't going to be able to get on a lot of the things they wanted to get on, because of both forces at work fighting each other. So they went for putting out factual booklets on domestic violence and where one could go for help, and working on issues that everyone could agree on. But all the effort it took to create that group . . . !

That's another example where to work within the government system is so much slower and so much more cumbersome, because you *are* having to follow the democratic process to the ultimate degree—even to the point of creating an ineffective body. That's when I began to feel I would much rather work with people who agreed with me and go create our own group, and then just go make it happen, because we could move so much faster than serving on a committee like that where you had to be sparring with the enemy all the time.

I mean, that's what we did when we created the library.

So I guess what I'm saying is, I don't regret ever having done the legislative experience, but my more effective times have been when we could move faster outside that arena. Part of that's because I never had a really critical mass of people with me who agreed on the issues I worked on while I was in the Legislature, so that you couldn't move as far. You couldn't make as much progress as you would like.

But all of these things—the experience of the women's conference, the Humanities grant for taking it out to rural Nevada, then going to Houston—I mean, *all* of that took place in the course of a year. It was this 1977 year, and I simply couldn't have done it had I stayed in the Legislature. Well, there were people in the Legislature on the committee—Sue and Mary Gojack—but they played much lesser roles, and I was able to play more of a leadership role in this arena. So I look at it as a real “silver lining.” The other one was getting my master's degree, so there were two very “silver linings” to losing that election in 1976. [laughter] I would realize that fairly soon afterwards.

All of that put me in touch with the national scene of the women's movement, both having been a legislator and now having been a leader in the I.W.Y. (International Women's Year) Women's Conference process from beginning to end. I was on everybody's mailing list. I belonged to a number of national organizations. I had colleagues—former legislators, former League leaders. Now, I had connections with all these people I met in Houston, and so I *truly* was part of a national network of the national women's movement.

That has continued to this day. Some periods of time were less active than others, but it has been real exciting to connect with people all over the country, and then see them move into different positions of leadership. Out of that came several national networks that I was active with and continued my connection with, like the Center for American Women in Politics at Rutgers and that type of thing.

*I'm thinking that this is one of those points where you would use your favorite quote about, “Life is what's happening to you while you make other plans,” because this turned out to be very*



*important to you and to who you are and who you've become.*

Right. [laughter] Oh, yes! It did, and it made me grow into a much stronger person—more informed. It was a *big* factor in my development of who I am—that experience.

We had our own magazine that we put out at the conference which we called *Choices: Exploring the Lifestyles of Nevada Women*. This magazine was just a project in itself. A whole group took on editing this and calling for contributions in art and poetry, and it was very well received. In it is a quote that I liked a lot, and that I've used in speeches that I gave. It was from a woman who was the Assistant Secretary General of Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations. This is what she said: "Nothing we want will happen until women cease to accept the notion that they are the *only* ones responsible for the family, and until men cease to believe that they are the only ones responsible for the society."

The traditional way was still that kind of separate spheres theory—that the woman takes care of the home and the man takes care of outside the home. But what she was saying—and her name was Helvi Sipilä—was that truly the ills of society aren't going to be cured to a great degree until we start blending and moving more into a partnership of men and women working together, *both* on the family and society as a whole.

That's really where we were with the women's bill of rights and plan of action. For the most part, we were very open to working with men on all of this. There were men at the Houston conference, not as delegates but as observers and as supporters. Although, during this period of time in the women's movement, there were people who felt men were so much the problem that there were

separatists who said women should just go off alone and create their own colonies even and take charge. That was a very small element but, of course, it got a lot of press. There were women who honestly were in that mind set at that point in time.

I think there still are women who feel men are the enemy and, actually, the whole psycho-sexual relationships of men and women is such a battle for power, and the man dominates in such a way that man is evil, et cetera. But I think, for the most part, most women have moved in the direction that the answer comes from a partnership of men and women working together.

*This Sipilä quote was far ahead of its time, in terms of what was happening with the women's movement, even at that time?*

Yes. Yes. We had just a wonderful group of women in Nevada that participated in all of this. Some had come into it with a lot more knowledge and experience than others. For many of us, it was *very* new and carried us very quickly into a whole other arena, but when we came back there was a lot of negative press on the conference. We had these anti people who went from Nevada led by Karen Hayes. When we came back she went around and spoke to a lot of the LDS Church groups in southern Nevada and really put the conference down and talked about the most radical demonstrations that she could identify, because the E.R.A. was going to be on the ballot. So we were back right in the middle of a big political fight in Nevada. There was a lot of conflict, and it became more and more evident that there were quite strong differences of opinion on what the answers were to the role of women.

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## DIVORCE: TAKING STOCK AND TAKING CHARGE

Well, another thing happened to me, while I was making other plans [laughter] that probably is appropriate that we bring in at this point in time. The Nevada women's conference was in June of 1977. In July of 1977 my daughter, Carla, had come home for a brief break and was going back to Reed College for the summer to work. On July 5 my husband and I had taken her to the airport, and we came back to the house and he said, "There's something that I want to talk with you about."

Basically, he told me he was leaving. And within a couple of hours he had, in fact, left the house and had gone to another life. He left me with a yellow pad of instructions on how to take care of the house and told me that the house was mine and the car was mine. Where we had joint ownership of certain stocks, these were also going to be mine. He was giving me everything except his medical practice, and he was leaving.

*Had you had any indication?*

Well, yes. There had been something evolving over two or three years. A whole lot

of things had been evolving, obviously, and I'll come back to that, but that day just will always be one of those days in my life.

My immediate reaction was that it was all my fault—that I had been the one living a non-traditional life, so to speak, and I felt *very* guilty. I said, "I've done this to you," or whatever, and he looked very uncomfortable and said no. But he did, in fact, leave. He came back later, so we were able to process all of this over several months, which helped us both understand what was happening.

By September, I had filed for a divorce. At first I felt that there *was* a way for us to come back together again, but I began to realize that didn't make sense and I did file for the divorce. It was non-contested, so it didn't take very long. By the time that we went to Houston, I'd already gotten my divorce, so all of this happened that summer.

To back up for a minute, from the time that I ran for office—where my husband was very supportive—I moved out into another whole world that we had not been in before. I *thrived* in it. He was very proud of me and

very supportive. We did get to a point in campaigning where I did not lean on my husband or my children. They *never* went door-to-door—any of them. The idea didn't appeal to them at all, and I didn't even try to make them. I thought that's up to them. They were really good at pounding signs in the ground and would sort mailings at home and help with those kinds of things. So they were involved in my campaign, but not publicly to any degree.

There were *many*, many functions at which I should be present. At that point in time, a lot of the social functions were where women wore long gowns. It was kind of dress-up affairs, and you really did need a male escort to look OK, you know. [laughter] My husband really didn't like doing a lot of that, and we agreed that he didn't have to. There were two or three social functions a year that he would enjoy, because he enjoyed the people that he saw there, and we went to those. Then I had this list of men, who were husbands of friends or single men or supporters of me politically, that I would draw on to be my escort to these other functions, which was just fine with Sam. He was relieved to be out of the expectation that he go. We dealt with that issue in that way. Some of the men I recall performing that escort role were George Bubnis, Thom Pilkington, and Bill Conaty. What was happening, as I look back later, is that I was becoming more and more of a public figure. I was in Carson for significant periods of time and off on interim committees, and we did grow apart in terms of just the experiences that we both were having.

The other thing that happened is that we had some good friends in southern California named the Shermans—Nancy and George. They had children our children's age. We had, in fact, gone down and spent summers at the beach with them as two families coming

together and enjoying each other. There were a bunch of Sam's college friends that we kept in touch with in southern California. At some point back there in the early seventies, George, who worked at Disney Studios, became ill with a really rare kind of disease and kind of lingered for some time. Sam started going down and visiting with him on separate trips to southern California. Sam had always been a water person and enjoyed sailing, and the Shermans had boats down at Newport, so they had this common interest of the water. He would go down and take the kids, and they would go boating with the Sherman kids.

Well, by 1977 what had happened is, for about three years Sam and George's wife, Nancy, had watched George die together, and, basically, a relationship developed out of that. He felt I did not need him—that I had this other life. We talked about this, so I think this is what he would say: that I was destined to be some kind of public figure in Nevada, and he thought that was right. He thought that was the way things ought to work, but he didn't see that *he* needed to be a part of that or that I needed him to be a part of my support system.

In the meantime, this relationship with Nancy developed through the events that were going on there. George did die, and she let it be known to Sam that *she* needed him. What happened is that he had been going down, being around her and with her, and when he left he went to her. They went off sailing on a big, long trip that afternoon. I mean, he said, "I'm leaving," and he left. In fact, *no* one could even get in touch with him for over a week.

Our two daughters . . . I'm trying to remember. Carla did *not* know. We put her on the plane; he told me immediately afterwards. She found out that day or the next day when I telephoned her and she really felt like he had left her, too, of course. Both the girls were not

as devastated as I (I don't think), but really felt *left* by the manner in which this happened, even though they were adults. Carla was in college. Jan was living at home and dancing at the MGM or Bally's, whichever it was called at that point. She actually did know that this was going to happen that day. He had talked with her and said, "Help take care of your mother," you know, kind of thing. [laughter] So here she is with that kind of responsibility.

What happened is that he realized that it just wasn't that easy, and later he came back. All of a sudden he was out in the ocean with Nancy, and all that was supposed to be sweetness and light, but he realized you don't just walk away from twenty-two years of marriage and family and forget about it. Particularly, it hit him that he hadn't addressed the issue of how to deal with his relationship with his daughters at all. He *had* with me: he didn't feel like I needed him. He was just going to go off and have this new life, and it wouldn't make any difference. But he hadn't addressed the issue of how he actually felt about Carla and Janet, and how *they* might react to what he was doing.

*And you said that he thought you didn't need him. What was your reality on that?*

Oh, well, my reality was that I needed him a *lot*, and that I had, of course, felt that we had a good marriage. We did have a good marriage for twenty-two years. Early on, we talked about the lack of communication in the homes in which I grew up, and in reality his home was much the same. Even as we came together and created our own family, there was not open communication on feelings. I mean, we never fought openly, and we never shared feelings openly as a family, so by the time we got to the mid-seventies, we had both gone off into different interests. We had

assumptions about each other that we weren't sharing out loud.

By that time I had begun to work with other people. Some of the men I met in my political experience were men that I could connect with, not in a sexual kind of way, but we became good friends to where we did share feelings. Part of it was about these issues that we were dealing with, and we would commiserate with each other about things. I began to realize how *great* it was to have a deeper relationship with someone, where you did talk about feelings and you did talk about things that were important. I was experiencing this, and I wanted to have that with him. So I was *pressing* him for us to have that in our own relationship.

In fact, that summer we had plans to go on a trip together. We hadn't been off into one of our northern Nevada trips that we'd made when the kids were young, and we had plans to do that in August of that year. The women's conference was over with and I had my master's program under control, and *my* agenda was really to connect with my husband.

All of a sudden, he was gone. It was too late. It was too late, but I was in that mode where I was really looking forward to our developing a deeper relationship that had to do with communicating with each other. That made his leaving even more devastating to me, and I did feel the total responsibility.

I was a basket case for awhile. It was *very* hard for me to process what was going on. I felt alone. I felt incomplete. I had been reading and I'd been hearing these people talk about displaced homemakers, and this whole business of what it meant to be a woman with your independence and personal power. I began to realize that I had *never* felt that I was a totally independent woman. I would walk down the street, and all I would see were

couples, and I wasn't part of a couple anymore. I had this total feeling that I was incomplete, because the *man* in my life was gone. I wasn't a complete person without him, which I had read a little bit about in material about women and consciousness-raising and everything, but now I was one of them. I realized that I had been raised and had been living the role of the "other"—of the subordinate woman who was totally dependent on a man for completeness.

There was *nothing* going on, to speak of, that summer in the community. We'd all given everything we had on this conference. Fortunately, [laughter] I didn't have to be anywhere or do anything for a few weeks. Jan was there, and she was a big support. Carla was back up in Portland and having her own set of problems about all this.

Sam came back within a couple of weeks. They (he and Nancy) came back into port and he connected with Carla. He went to Portland, I believe, to see her. Sam and Nancy came back to Clark County; they were going to live in Boulder City. His mother was in town and knew a little bit of what was going on with Sam and Nancy, but was not in on his leaving and was *very* upset about that.

When he came back, we talked a lot. We met with a friend of his who was a counselor. I basically begged him to come back. I felt we could start over. We could recognize what had happened, and if we wanted to make it different, we could. I think he considered that for a short time, but probably because he was afraid that I was going to crack up, *not* because he thought it was the right thing to do. He had really been pulled in the other direction by this time, by Nancy. We had some pretty emotionally draining meetings, where I just finally realized it wasn't going to work, and it was crazy to try to beg him to come back.

At some point in my life later that summer—and I can't tell you why or how, but it was within about two months—I just really sat down and talked with myself and said, "You know, really, what am I doing? If he doesn't feel that living with me is going to be pretty exciting, then forget it." And I grew up. Right then is when I realized I could be a whole person by myself. It happened *very* quickly, and it isn't that I didn't have a lot of lonely times and still feel guilty. . . and what was I going to do—my God!—in the community? Here I was, this successful woman politician, and all of a sudden my marriage was broken up. All of those people who point to all these *dire* things that happen if you get too involved outside the home, and here I was the living example of all of that happening. I ended up writing a letter to a *ton* of people that I knew that were either colleagues or friends and told them what was going on.

Basically, in the course of just a few weeks, I was really looking at the rest of my life and saying, "Wow! What am I going to do?" Here is this opportunity to go be and do some things that I might want to do, and so what are they? Let's go do them. So I did. [laughter]

There was one book that I read that—reading books being of real value to me, has always been a piece of my life—and this was a book called *Creative Divorce* by Mel Krantzler (1973). I don't know if somebody gave it to me or I just found it. I know I went to the library and looked for what it had about divorce, because I had never expected to be in this position, ever. That book was *really, really* helpful. What I recall is that it basically said, you can take charge of your own life and make it what you want it to be. You don't have to be pulled down as a result of this experience, and you don't have to drag other people down. I can't remember the specifics, but it was very, very much a tool that I used in trying to help me sort out where I went from there.



Part of my agenda was graduate work. I was already enrolled, and I moved into being a T.A. that fall with Professor Al Johns in the Political Science Department. I led the Nevada delegation to Houston and then graduated the following spring. So that whole winter was pretty much spent in school, pretty intensely. I probably took nine credits and was a T.A. at the same time.

*And how was it for your daughters?*

Well, it was rough for them and for different reasons. Actually, I wasn't on a level where I was in real close communication with them or at the level of understanding where *they* were with this, so I wasn't a lot of help.

*Because you were dealing with your own feelings?*

That's right. They were of *great* help to me. We were laughing, when they were here recently, at probably one of the absolutely most devastating times. One was the day he left and my just feeling of emptiness and incompleteness at that point.

Then in taking charge of my life, I decided to buy a new car. We had an Audi, as I recall, that I was driving. Here I was now, I needed to go buy a car by myself. Actually, my daughter, Janet, was really good at this kind of thing, so she had worked with me, and I picked a Chevrolet Monte Carlo. The car I currently had was going to count for so much on the trade-in, and the day that I was supposed to trade the car in and get my new car, I had an accident with the Audi. I was coming home from the other side of town in Las Vegas, and I headed up onto the freeway and rear-ended the car in front of me. I was looking the wrong direction, *gunning* it to go forward into the freeway, and I ran right into this other car.

I was just literally headed home to go pick up one of the girls to go with me to get the new car.

It turned out that my car was driveable, and so after we did all that we needed to do to file the police report, I took the car home. When I arrived home, I just collapsed. I was just in tears. I couldn't function, because I just felt totally inadequate. Here I was supposed to know that I could take care of myself, and I'd just blown it. Both my daughters were there, and they will say to this day that they have just never seen anything worse than where I was that day. I was just on the floor in terms of feeling like, "Oh, wow!" you know. Here's what it's like to be on your own and not be up to dealing with it.

At some point they got me together, and we went and got my new car without the trade-in. We re-negotiated it, whatever. [laughter] But that was, you know, one of those experiences that you just look back and say, "Wow!"

*All the while, you were handling Nevada's statewide women's conference, and the details of running your personal life were things where you'd had help before.*

Oh, yes. I hadn't dealt with anything related to house maintenance or cars. What I began to experience—and then I realized later—was truly all of the things that a displaced homemaker experiences. This was a term we were just beginning to be familiar with as women. I experienced it all, short of having to go out and immediately get a job, and there I was very fortunate. Part of this plan that my husband had made for me was that he would give me \$1,000 a month as long as I needed it, with the idea that he knew that I wanted to finish this degree. He was supportive of my doing that. He knew that



I would want to go to work in some way for money, and at that point in time I wouldn't need his money. And so that was kind of the agreement that he had developed that, ultimately, was in our divorce papers.

The interesting thing is that I totally accepted that. *I* was the one who finally filed for the divorce, because I just could see no light at the end of that tunnel at that point. My attorney, Terry Jones, said, "But you are married to a physician, and don't you want some residual out of his medical practice?" In other words, are you just going to go with this plan of a thousand a month until you find work?

I said, "Yes, I'm very capable of taking care of myself."

This was now like September, October, so all this happened very quickly. I really was at the point in the women's movement when I felt, "I'll show him! *I can* take care of myself." I just reversed very quickly. I went into this mode that said, "Once I get my degree, I will find work. I will get a job. I will move in a career of some kind, and I don't need his money, but I will take the thousand dollars a month until I do."

The attorney didn't try to talk me into any different settlement than that. Later, when I became more aware, I realized that I should have gone for more, especially when I started looking at how was I ever going to retire. [laughter] It was all based on what I was going to put together. It was perfectly *proper* for a woman to go for some equity related to twenty-two years of marriage and motherhood and taking care of a husband's domestic needs, but at that point I did not want it, and I did not ask for it, so I did not get it. [laughter]

So that was a really significant event, here in the middle of this decade of political activity. 1977 was a different year in terms

of having lost the election in 1976, then doing the graduate work, then the women's conference, and in the middle of all that, my husband leaving.

*And how were your girls doing during these years with you being, part of the time, in Carson and traveling and involved in these projects?*

Well, we need to kind of back up a little bit and talk about them, since we last left them when I was getting ready to run for office. I think this is a whole decade that they would rather forget, probably.

*Maybe we can talk about it in terms of what you were aware of then, and what you know now, because you all probably have wonderful hindsight now.*

Right. Right. I continued to help meet their basic needs at the time. I was home a lot. I picked them up from school when they needed to be picked up. I was a Girl Scout leader part of the time before I was elected to the Legislature. They were in junior high and high school and then went on into college. I was very proud of them. As I said a lot earlier, I wanted them to grow up and be independent women. I continued to treat them in that manner; but I now know that I was not there when they needed me a lot of the time. I was too taken by this new world that I had found, where I was growing up and learning who I could be and how I could do that, so there was not the kind of basic communication that was needed, in terms of my husband and me or between my daughters and me. The kind of communication I had with my two daughters I thought was good, but it wasn't of the depth that I really knew some of the needs that they had. I didn't know that until later.

*Can you give some examples of things that have come out later?*

Right. Carla, I knew, was an unhappy person in some ways. She would cry at night, and we would talk, and I would try to find out what was wrong. She couldn't really articulate to me what it was. I knew that she was unhappy. At one time I went to my husband and said, "Do you think that we ought to get some professional help for Carla?" I don't know that I said that. I may have said, "We need to have her see someone, a psychologist or something."

He said, "No, I don't think so." And I was very much the wife of a doctor who accepted what he said. I didn't raise the issue anymore. I thought, "Well, he knows better than I." I was also the woman who looked to the husband for those kinds of decisions, so we did not seek help for her. Later on, other things manifested themselves, to the point where she did need professional help. I don't know that it would have solved a lot of things had we done it when she was ten or twelve or fourteen, but we *should* have tried to connect her with some professional help at that time.

She was actually not sharing with us a lot of how she felt about herself. She was a very high achiever, and in that respect she kind of exhibited some of the things I had—that you gain popularity by doing it better than anybody else. She had excellent grades. She had been moved up from kindergarten to first grade in the first year and was always a year ahead of a lot of her other peers and did very well. She graduated from Valley as a Presidential Scholar that year and went back to the White House and met the President.

Then she went on to Reed College in Portland. She was accepted at several colleges—didn't quite know what she wanted

to do—but was accepted at places like Cal Tech and Stanford and at Yale. She didn't even go back to look at Yale, because she didn't want to go to the east coast. Her dad took her to visit the colleges in the West. She decided she wanted a small liberal arts college, so she went to Reed in Portland and ended up majoring in chemistry, and then applied for M.D. and Ph.D. programs and was accepted at Johns Hopkins, so went back east then to go to medical school.

One summer she worked in Idaho Falls for, I think, E.P.A. [the Environmental Protection Agency] doing environmental monitoring and had an apartment by herself. I visited her during the summer. Another summer she worked at Reed in the chemistry lab. She liked backpacking with the Sierra Club and did a lot of Sierra hiking and was active and led a full life.

She went to Girls State. The junior year in high school is when you go to Girls State, and she was one of the two chosen to go to Girls Nation in Washington, D.C. to represent Nevada. That was the same summer that she and two of her friends had decided they would hike the Yosemite-to-Tahoe trail. My husband and I drove them to Yosemite to start that hike, and that was one of the times I just remember seeing those three girls with their backpacks head off into the wilderness and just thought, "Why are we letting them do this?"

They had quite an experience, because it was in June and icy and the snow was still on the ground up there. The trail was covered by ice and snow; you couldn't find your way very easily. They got to the first cache. (We ended up dropping food at the places along the route that they would come to, along Highway 4 and 88.) They came to the first one and called home and said, "Come and get us," because it was really dangerous up there that year, and

they were lucky to get to this first spot. One of them had really bad blisters to the point that she couldn't continue, and Carla needed to be in Washington at Girls Nation. They needed to meet a certain schedule in order to do all this, which they weren't meeting due to the condition of the trail. So she grew up a lot that summer [laughter] on that trek up in the mountains.

We were still doing a lot of things as a family, but she had her own set of feelings of inadequacy that we didn't know she had, to the point that she had always felt inadequate, even when she was a little girl. That didn't really begin to come out until after she graduated from medical school. Then it became apparent to her that she had experienced some real trauma as a child that we knew nothing about. We began to talk about this and communicated in more depth. She did get professional help, and this has been a continuing part of her life which she is dealing with, and I have tried to work closely with her and be of help when I could. We are working on that even to this day.

*Yes. In hindsight, does that make you wish that you had followed your instincts rather than your husband's?*

Oh, *absolutely*. Absolutely. I feel that I was very remiss in not giving the attention to her needs, and I will always feel that way. But I didn't, and so I've had to deal with that. She and I have talked about that. She has been angry over that, as she deserves to be, and we've kind of worked our way through all that. We are, I think, *very* close today, but we recognize that there were a lot of things that happened during those years, that if we could go do it over again, it would be a lot different.

Jan also was a good student—equally as bright as Carla—but never really applied

herself to the point that Carla did, so she didn't make as good grades, as I recall. It's interesting, because for some reason, we never looked ahead at the possibility of Jan going to college away from home. Like today, people are already by tenth or eleventh grade looking at colleges their kids want to go to and making sure they're getting the right advanced training to take the S.A.T's. We didn't do *any* of that during that period of time. I mean, she didn't bring it up and we didn't talk about it. Again, here I was off doing my thing a lot of the time, so it kind of evolved that U.N.L.V. would be the place to go. We *did* expect the girls to go to college, but this whole idea of finding the right place for her away from home was not in the scheme, and she never pressed us on that.

Both the girls started working, like at retail stores for pin money. Jan got a job at the Thunderbird as a slot girl for a short time. She didn't know what she wanted to do. She thought she might like criminal justice, so she was taking a course at the university that had to do with that. She took two or three courses at the university and worked. She made A's or D's, depending on whether she liked the professor.

She was dating a Cuban guy. His name was Victor, and they were having a lot of fun together. They were a *great* couple. By this time, she was six feet tall and a very attractive person. They loved to dance, and they were just really excellent dancers together. Well, they started having difficulty in their relationship, because he really was Cuban and had been raised with this traditional idea that the woman was going to be the "other," (subservient) and she really *was* an independent woman at this point in her life. She started having difficulties with Victor and thought, "What could I do that would make him most angry?" The idea of being a topless

show girl was something she settled on that would show *him*, you know, and so that's what she did. She went out and auditioned and got hired as a topless showgirl.

*What was your response to that?*

Well, [laughter] I was not totally opposed. I just thought, "Gee, I don't know that that's what I'd like for her to be doing," but I didn't try to stop her. We'd had this girl down the street who was a Bluebell, who had been her babysitter when she was younger.

*And a Bluebell? Tell me what that is.*

A dancer at the Stardust—a really specialty kind of show dancer. We lived in Las Vegas right next to people who were very much into show business all over town.

She got that job and started at the MGM, and this started a career for her. She quit going to the university. She moved out of the house and got an apartment with friends, and she started dancing. Well, she started being a show girl. Around her nineteenth birthday, Sam and I went to see her in "Hallelujah Hollywood" at the MGM. She drew us a map as to where we could find her in the first number and the second number and the third number. In the first number, she's going to be third in from the left on the fourth row, or something like this, because this was a cast of hundreds. They had elaborate headdresses and outfits. They look all alike if you don't know what you're looking for. We followed this map and found her, and we sat there, and that whole evening, we just kind of looked at each other, smiling, and said, "Who would have thought nineteen years ago, we'd be doing this?"

We were *proud* of her. This was an accepted part of Las Vegas. Many of my husband's patients were show people. We knew that

they were *real* people. [laughter] But I did have misgivings about some of the people she would associate with, even though we knew they were real people. Somehow there was still a gulf between us and that whole world. I really was concerned about drugs and the lifestyle of the people that were there. The fact that she was topless didn't bother me, particularly, because we had been to lots of shows, and we knew lots of people who were in show business, and we knew that was just part of the art form of a Las Vegas show.

Some of this time she was also living at home, and she would regale us with these stories of what went on behind the scenes—when the animals would get loose and when the elevators didn't work right. Oh, my! I hope someday she will do an oral history or write a journal or a book about experiences of being a show girl in Las Vegas and Paris, because it was *incredible*.

She started almost immediately taking dancing lessons from the dancers. There's a hierarchy in these shows, and a topless show girl is at the *bottom*. Then there's the topless dancers; and then there are covered dancers; and then there are principal dancers; and then there are singers and others that are in the show. She started taking dancing lessons from the dancers, kind of in between shows. This is when they did two shows a night and three shows on Saturday.

Two years later, the Stardust auditioned for some new dancers to be in their line for a new show they were doing: "The Lido" was the name of the show at the Stardust and "Hallelujah Hollywood" at MGM. She auditioned to be a dancer. They auditioned all over the west coast, and when it was done, she was hired as one of those dancers and went to the Stardust.

This was actually at the same time that Frank Rosenthal and some of his buddies

were taking over the Stardust, and he was going to be head of the casino. Eventually, he was blackballed by the Gaming Commission and wasn't allowed to do that; so then he said he would be head of entertainment, which didn't require a gaming license. Through some maneuvering he went into that position for a short time, and while she was in rehearsals for the opening of the new "Lido", which opened that Christmas, there was a *very* stormy time there where he was actually in charge of the show along with his cronies. My daughter decided she did not want to have anything to do with them. I think she was only there six or eight months.

She then called Donn Arden, who had been the producer along with Madam Bluebell. They, together, were the creative people behind "The Lido" and behind "Hallelujah Hollywood," as far as the hiring of the dancers and the creation of the choreography and everything. She said, "I'm not going to put up with this. I can't *work* in this environment. What would you suggest?"

He said, "Why don't you come to Paris?" And she went to Paris and danced in "The Lido" for a year and a half. So she moved up very quickly from topless show girl to dancer, and then to dancer in Paris.

Christmas of 1978, Carla and I went to Paris and spent two weeks with Jan. Carla came back from college, and we went to Paris, and we just had an incredible time. I cooked Christmas dinner on this little apartment stove in Paris for all these show kids from all over the world that she was dancing with. We rented a car and made a little trip out to Mont-St.-Michel and took a loop around the Paris countryside and just had a wonderful time.

At the end of the year and a half, she came back from Paris to Las Vegas and auditioned to become a part of the new show at the MGM Grand, "Jubilee," and was hired as one of the

principals. So now they were in rehearsal for the opening of "Jubilee" and she was one of like four girl dancers (they call them girl dancers and boy dancers no matter what age you were) to be the lead dancers in the show. That's when the *fire* came—the MGM fire. They were in rehearsal. She was living at home. She was actually asleep at home when the fire hit early in the morning, but one of the costume seamstresses, as I recall, was killed in that fire. She was down in the basement when the fire broke out and could not get out.

All of a sudden, Janet's out of a job, as was the entire hotel staff for several months. Janet ended up being hired by the Tropicana as a show girl. The "Jubilee" cast just went everywhere, all over the world. Some of the people went on cruise ships. Others filled in vacancies for other shows in town. Others went to New York and all over, but Jan was able to get a job at the Tropicana and was there for several months until the MGM called the cast back together again, though lots of them didn't come back. They had to kind of start over. I think that was the following spring—that fire was in the fall—she came back and then opened in "Jubilee" as a principal dancer and continued in that show for about ten to twelve years. She was moving out into another whole world of her own.

*Did she have similar feelings as Carla, that you had not been there for her at some times?*

Yes. We have talked about it—not to the extent that Carla and I have. I really don't know my daughter, Janet, as well as I do my daughter, Carla. I think there's still things there that I don't know about, that's she's been unwilling to share. I think we should have been closer, and I should have been there, and we should have communicated more just as a



total family. I know that both of the girls had real difficulty resolving their relationships with their father, and that continues to this day to some extent, although we all have been together on reunions, and we talk together.

*Was that because of the divorce, or because of other things, or both?*

Both, I would say. They both have had to deal with their relationship with their father in a different way than they've dealt with their relationship with me. Both of the girls were real supportive of me at the time of our divorce. It was then that we very quickly became closer than we'd ever been before, and they saw the *vulnerable* side of me real quick and did what they could to help me. *Both* have said to me how proud they were of how I handled all of that, ultimately.

The fact that the divorce happened has played a role in their relationship with their father. They don't think he did right by me, and I think there's real evidence that *he* recognizes that, too. It hasn't been an easy go for him.

*Interesting that a divorce isn't something that happens in isolation, and then it's done. There's still all these relationships that go on with you for the rest of your lives, and you're still dealing with them.*

Oh, yes. Right. They do. And he did not comprehend that at all, and he has lived with it since in various ways. We have been together a number of times again as a family and enjoyed each other, and Sam and I have continued to communicate, mainly relating to the girls and what was happening to them.

He, from the very beginning, assumed responsibility for seeing Carla through college and helping Jan if she wanted it. She,

ultimately, went back and finished and got a degree on her own at U.N.L.V. while she was a dancer. The girls were never *my* financial burden. They were either independent or my husband was helping them with what they needed.

Sam was very proud. We all were together at Carla's graduation from medical school. He came back, and we went to Baltimore together as a family and we had a wonderful time, so we've been able to work out something that has been more or less satisfactory.

Kind of backing up to that whole decade. Sam was *very* supportive— came to the Legislature several times and brought Carla up, like on her sixteenth birthday, and we took her up to Lake Tahoe during the session to celebrate. He enjoyed what I was doing, politically, and was a part of it. I bounced a lot of things off of him. He was *very* proud of me. His patients that came in to see him as a dermatologist, there was always a lot of talk about me and what I was doing. We did a *lot* of great things together. There was just a whole level of communication that wasn't going on. On the surface, it looked very good.

*Even though you were away doing your thing, as you say, there were still family activities and family events that were being maintained?*

Right. That's right. We did *lots* of things together, even during those years, as a family.

In 1975, during the legislative session, he had a mild heart attack at home in Las Vegas and was in the hospital for just a few days, and I went down that weekend and was with him. It was mild and he was able to function. We determined together that I could come back up to the session and I did. That was about the time of our twentieth wedding anniversary. He enjoyed my legislative life in many ways, and he enjoyed talking about the

work I was doing. We made a *lot* of friends with legislators and their wives or husbands.

We still did entertaining at home. I still liked to cook and would have people over. He enjoyed a good conversation about the issues of the day. We still had a lot in common and did a lot of things together.

One other thing about Carla involved an accomplishment of hers that I was very proud of. By way of background, Congress passed a program called the Truman Scholarship, and it was designed for people who had finished two years of college and who were looking at going on to graduate work and some kind of work in public service. Carla was an applicant and, ultimately, the winner of the first Truman Scholarship in Nevada. This would have been in her junior year in college. It was one of those things where you competed in the college where you attended, but then there was *one* Nevada woman and one Nevada man chosen. They could be going to college anywhere in the country. They came up through this competition. So she, ultimately, was the Truman scholar from Nevada—the woman. There was a young man from Las Vegas who was chosen as the man. We *all*, as a family, went to Kansas City to see her receive the Truman Scholarship at the home of Harry Truman. That was another exciting moment for us with Carla.

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## JOINING DEMOCRATS, CAMPAIGNING FOR STATE SENATE, 1978

One of the things that happened during that two-year period when I was not in the Legislature is that I changed parties, and that had a very direct effect on what I did in politics later.

I was always an individual who appealed to people on the basis of issues that we cared about and that we were going to work on together. The party line, so to speak, was never my strong element, because I had never been active in the party. All my involvement had come through the League of Women Voters, as an officer in the League, where I was not allowed by League rules to also become active in a partisan way. My very nature was to be *non-partisan* [laughter] with my approach and to reach out to anyone who cared about the issues that I cared about, or for me to listen to the people in the district and learn what issues were important to them. I didn't care whether they were Democrats or Republicans. I would go to work on the things that we felt ought to be worked on.

That worked fine, as long as I was in the Assembly where I didn't need the party

backing. But when I ran for the Senate, all of a sudden I was in a *huge* race with a hundred thousand voters, and going door-to-door was not a good use of my time. For a variety of reasons, I lost. I didn't know, at that point, whether I would ever run again. I wasn't really bitter. I was devastated personally, but not really bitter. I could see a variety of reasons why I'd lost. Part of it was my own fault. I did find other things to do that were equally absorbing and, as it turned out, really beneficial to me in my life—to get my master's degree and to chair the women's conference.

In the middle of 1977 the head of the Democratic Party in Clark County, a woman named Marguerite Segretti, decided to make an issue of the fact that a number of the Democrats on the Central Committee had endorsed me in the race that I lost for the state Senate. She decided to take them to task and propose at a Democratic Central Committee meeting that they be *purged* from the Central Committee. Now, why she felt that strongly, I don't know. I knew who she was, but we hadn't had any encounters to speak of. I'd lost the

election, [laughter] so it wasn't like I'd taken all this stuff away from them.

One of the ads we had toward the end of the campaign was just maybe two hundred names of people in an ad saying, "We liked her brand of representation. When she was in the Assembly, we liked what she did for us, and now we'd like to see her in the Senate."

These were people who had lived in my Assembly district. A *lot* of the people whose names were in the ad were Democrats, and two or three of them were people who happened to be on the Democratic Central Committee. They technically were not being good, loyal party people to cross over and have their names in an ad for a Republican.

*And those were the people she was trying to purge from the Central Committee?*

Right. *They* didn't have to pay anything to have their name in the ad. What was ironic about all this is that I had gotten *major* campaign contributions from a few very high-level Democrats in that race, which no one ever knew about. They were less than \$500, so they did not have to be declared. My campaign records had that, but it wasn't public. The people who could afford to give me money directly did, and Marguerite didn't have *them* on her list, but these little people who couldn't afford to give me money, or who preferred to support me by letting their names be used in the ad, were the ones she was coming after. So it was petty.

The whole election was over with. This was in the spring, and four or five months had passed. I had been thinking about changing parties for some time, just because I realized that for the most part it was the Democrats that were working with me on the issues that I cared about and who had helped me in my campaign. I knew a little bit more about where

the two parties stood in Nevada and I felt, overall, more comfortable in the Democratic Party. But I was working on my master's, I was chairing the Women's Conference Committee when these *rumbles* started where she was causing all this dialogue within the Democratic Party.

A reporter called me up—I think it was a television station reporter—and said, "Do you know that Marguerite Segretti has on the agenda of the Central Committee this item of kicking out these people who supported you in your campaign?"

I didn't know that it had gotten to that point. I said, "No, I didn't know that."

"Well, what do you think about that?"

I said, "Well, do you really want a story? Why don't you meet me at the Registrar of Voters headquarters?" I went down and switched right then! Of course, that took total air out of Marguerite's sails and made her my enemy for life, probably. [laughter] I became a Democrat that day. I went down, and I had been planning to do it, and I just thought, "This is ridiculous, so I'll show *her*." So I went down to the Registrar of Voters, and I became a Democrat. It had been evolving over several years—I hadn't decided when I'd do it, but this became a catalyst for "Let's get this dialogue back into perspective. She shouldn't be doing that to people. I'll go become a Democrat, and that'll take care of it." And so I did.

*Did you have any concerns at that point about whether there would be any negative repercussions from changing?*

Oh, no. I mean, there are always political repercussions to everything you do, [laughter] but I wasn't planning to run again, necessarily. I didn't have the rest of my life in focus at all. I was working on my master's, had been newly divorced, and I was chairing the women's

conference. What the future was beyond all of that was yet to be determined, but I *had* been thinking about switching enough that when this incident happened, I thought, “Well, let’s go do it now and have it *done*.”

Well, I made the press. I mean, I was *big news* for a day or two. All kinds of editorial comment; and generally, the attitude was that the Republicans felt “good riddance,” and the Democrats said, “Well, she’s come home at last.” Now, this wasn’t Marguerite Segretti’s comment, but I had many, many good friends and supporters in the Democratic Party, and they were pleased that I had switched. I had good friends in the Republican Party who wrote me very nice letters saying, “We’re sorry you felt you had to do what you did, but we respect you and we’re not going to write you off.” So it was a pretty interesting time.

I have two things that kind of help me remember what was going on. One is a letter I wrote. This was my style—to write letters to people at certain benchmarks along the way to make sure everybody knows what’s going on. I don’t remember the exact date that I switched, but I issued a press release on May 19. There were several newspaper editorials. One *big*, elaborate one was May 29, 1977 in the Reno paper, the *Nevada State Journal*, written by Foster Church.

This was a letter I sent to Republican friends on May 23, 1977. I said, “Dear Republican Friends: I wanted you to have the full content of my release of May 19, 1977.” Then this is about four paragraphs of a news release that I did: “It is with mixed feelings that today I am switching my party affiliation from Republican to Democrat. I have been a Republican all my life and felt very compatible with the party’s philosophy of individualism and self-reliance. However, my views for implementing these concepts have been more moderate than most Nevada Republicans

have been willing to accept. And I have never had strong support within the party, in spite of my willingness to be involved in party activities of all kinds—help recruit candidates, et cetera. It became apparent, last fall during my Senate race, that most Republicans would rather have no Republican in the state Senate than to have me.

“Now, as to Democrats—no Republican can ever win in Clark County today without massive support from the Democrats. For two terms I represented a largely Democratic district—evidently to their satisfaction from the percentage of the vote which I received for re-election. When I chose to run for the Senate, many of them offered to work in my campaign because we were concerned about the very same issues. Many of them, I might add, on the Democratic Party platform; and quite frankly, they liked my type of representation more than some of their own candidates. It has been rather well-known among both party circles that I was contemplating making a switch, and this current inter-party fight doesn’t make it easy.” (And there I’m referring to the Marguerite Segretti thing.) “But I might as well have it done with. There ought to be other ways of dealing with party loyalty in a less disruptive way.

“I would hope that a majority of the Democrats now would want to spend their time on more important things, including a critical look at how their Democrats in the Legislature performed in relation to those issues for which they have great concern. I hate to see party leadership turn on people who were only giving their support to candidates whose views reflect their own and often that of their party. I am quite aware that many Democrats will not welcome me with open arms, but as a Democrat I will continue to work with those whose concerns



about people are the same as mine, regardless of party affiliation. I hope there are many Nevadans who agree with my actions, and we will continue to work together in the future on issues of common interest.”

I ended this letter to Republican friends, “It is with much gratitude and appreciation that I recall your support for me and my activities in the years past. Please, let’s do keep in touch.”

That was my letter to my workers, to Republicans that I had done party activities with. The editorial comments flew for some time in the newspapers of the state. This one by Foster Church in Reno was *very* positive for me politically, saying: “The defection of Jean Ford to the Democratic Party says much about the state of the Republican Party in Nevada. Ford announced May 19, she had decided finally to make the switch. It didn’t come as a surprise. Although prominent Republicans aren’t admitting it, her change represents a *stunning* loss. She was one of the most popular Republicans in the state.”

Church had called me, and he went back and came up with this history as to how I became a Republican coming from Jasper County, Missouri, and kind of followed my career. He talks about me as a “natural politician” and “intelligent, well-informed, and after a decade with the League of Women Voters . . .” knew my way around the Legislature, became quickly respected and easily won re-election in 1974.

He goes on to talk about how the Republicans did *not* support me and, in fact, Oran Gragson, a prominent Republican and leader of the President Ford campaign, publicly supported Floyd Lamb, a Democrat, for the Senate. He ends by saying, “The change will probably make an important difference in her career. Although it’s believed some of the leading women in the Democratic Party

structure aren’t delighted with the prospect of a Ford in their future, she will, nevertheless, be a formidable presence. She is respected even by those Democrats whose views differ on E.R.A. And if she decides to run again, she will gain hard-line Democratic votes and some carry-over Republicans. She insists she’s not yet made up her mind to run again.”

That was *very* true, and he talks about all the activities I was involved in at that point: “Whether or not she decides to run, she will be a force of consequence in state politics. An endorsement by Jean Ford can mean something, particularly for the women’s vote. We have no doubt she’ll be cultivated carefully by Democratic political hopefuls, who would be delighted to have her on their side, regardless of her antecedents.”

So that was a very positive one, and there were several other editorials like that.

*Was most of the coverage positive about the switch?*

Yes. Yes. The reality was it was a good move for me for all the reasons that they gave. [laughter] But again, I go back to having said *both* the parties are very weak. Now, he says here, “We have no doubt she’ll be cultivated carefully by Democratic political hopefuls.” Well, that didn’t happen either.

The parties are *weak*. We have good evidence of that today, (1997) how the parties have not lined up and gotten behind leaders and really made a difference in seeing who’s going to run and what kind of support they’re going to give them.

*For example, in the Governor’s race now?*

*Right.* The Frankie Sue Del Papa race right now, and all of that. [Frankie Sue Del Papa, running for the Democratic nomination for

Governor in 1998, dropped out of the race, claiming that she could not raise sufficient money to compete in the current dollar-dominated political environment.]

When I *did* decide to run, it was not the party coming knocking on my door. It was some Democratic women who came and said, "We want you to run." But the party wasn't out there with my name on the list. [laughter]

*How did you decide? You'd been busy with other things in your life. How did the decision come about? Was it the visit from the Democratic women, or was it something else?*

Well, this switch took place in May, 1977. I was also in my master's program, and we were preparing for the Nevada Women's Conference, and my husband was getting ready to leave me in July. [laughter]

*Which you wouldn't have known at that point.*

Right. Right. It so happens that in order for one to be able to switch parties and run, they need to have done it at least a year ahead of the date of filing. I, in fact, had done that, so when 1978 came and the Democratic women called on me and said, "We want you to run," I *was* eligible to run as a Democrat. I don't recall that being a conscious decision. It was that Marguerite Segretti thing that triggered me into doing it when I did, and that turned out to be fortunate, because it did make me legal to be able to run as a Democrat the following year. But I *honestly* did not have it in my game plan.

In fact, I wasn't involved in politics at all then. The women's conference came in June. My husband left in July. I was a full-time student and a T.A. that following fall at the university, and I didn't have time to

do anything else but concentrate on getting that degree, which I did, and dealing with the emotional side of what was going on with me.

I have some notes that are kind of interesting. I've kept a file for a long time, and I just came across it. I was beginning to kind of look at myself in terms of career development and planning, particularly after the divorce: "What *am* I going to do? I now have this wide-open opportunity to be *me*. What is that?"

One of the organizations that I had joined was the American Society for Public Administration (A.S.P.A.), which is the professional organization for people who work in public service in government at all levels and for academics who teach public administration. I had been to a couple of national conferences and became the President of the Las Vegas chapter about that time. Most of my colleagues in the master's program were in that chapter, as well as some of the bosses—some of the people who were working in county government and state government. I went to the national conference of that organization in the spring of 1978 in Phoenix. This is the same month that I was graduating, and I was really getting excited about, "Well, what *am* I going to be?"

I actually have a career planning workshop exercise that I did at that A.S.P.A. conference which reveals what I was thinking at that point in time. It kind of gives an interesting feel. It was called "Career Assessment and Goal Setting—Putting It On The Line." It was a pretty intense weekend of stuff, and this is what I had written down: "A little more narrowing down in my mind of what kind of skills I have that are best and are most satisfying. Seriously want to pursue U.N.L.V. Assistant to the President position." (I did have that interview, and in the middle of the interview realized I didn't want the job at all.)

“And lean toward staying in Las Vegas rather than leaving town,” which, of course, I had an option to do. I mean, I was totally in limbo. Once I got my master’s I could do anything, anywhere I wanted within reason.

*Because your daughters were grown, and your husband was gone?*

Right, and he was giving me \$1,000 a month, which was enough to live on at that time. So I really was doing, you know, “What am I going to be when I grow up?” That process was going on.

From my A.S.P.A. career planning exercise: “What are the areas in which I would like to see personal and career growth?” OK. I said on career, “Learn more about T.A.” (I think that is Transactional Analysis) “and other techniques of interpersonal relationships. If I should go with the U.N.L.V. position, learn more about fundraising.

“Deciding whether or not to run for office in 1978.” (That was there as an option, but now we’re talking a year later after I’d switched parties. This was one of a big list of things; it wasn’t number one.) And then I said, “Assembly or County Commission.” (So I also was looking at the fact that there were other options if I did want to run for office then.) “Deciding whether or not to get involved in the Governor’s race.” And then, on personal: “Continue to improve my relationships with my daughters.”

*Get involved in the Governor’s race at what level? Do you know what you would have been thinking?*

Well, this was 1978. List won that race. Bob Rose was the candidate on the Democratic side, and he had just done this breaking the tie of the Equal Rights Amendment in 1977.

So it was probably to what extent could I give time? I was a Bob Rose supporter, and to what extent should I get involved in that race in trying to really give time and money?

*And the relationship with your daughters—was that because of something in particular, or was that just an ongoing?*

This was an ongoing. This was this whole recognition that me and my life had been high priority with me, even as they were growing up. Now I had time to say, before I jump into fifteen other things, that I also want to make sure that we’re giving a time for each other; that I’m giving them time; that I let them know it’s important; that I care about what’s happening to them and that we find time to be together.

Another question was, “What resources can I use to facilitate growth in these areas?” “Books,” I said; “training courses, networks of resource people, and consulting with friends and advisors.” And then, “If forced to make a wish list for me as a developing professional, what would I wish for me?” This is what I said, spring of 1978: “To understand myself better in order to help me in narrowing the options and making a specific career choice. To find a position or career that allows me freedom to be creative, innovative, using my organizational skills.” (So, I had a recognition that I had those talents.) Also: “To continue to adjust to divorce and to do a good job of being A.S.P.A. President.

“Why are these wishes rather than realities? Identify what had been barriers to accomplishing this.” And I said, “Completing my degree has had to be first priority. Time limitations to think about career options, and emotions and feelings regarding my divorce.” Those were all things that had taken higher priority, you know.

“What objectives am I willing to commit myself for?” At the workshop we actually were teamed up with others, and we shared these ideas with other people, and I was teamed with two guys. One was from Iowa, and I’ve forgotten where the other one was from. We actually shared our answers to all this and then committed to write each other letters within three months to find out how things were going, and we *did*. [laughter]

*To help keep you on track?*

That’s right. I mean, good workshop style here. So I said I was willing to commit to “. . . seeking contacts with those working in the fields related to the U.N.L.V. position and learn what’s involved. Talk with lots of people about what they’re doing—get a feel for different careers—and look at information on employers who have openings at A.S.P.A. personnel exchange booths.” So I was even looking at what were opportunities *other* places than Nevada in the whole world of public administration.

And then, for the near future, to “talk with Brock Dixon; then get an appointment for that position interview,” which I *did*, and I had the appointment. “Develop my thoughts on job description and implementation for that position. Make a firm decision on 1978 political plans by June 15. Spend time with my daughters and sort out personal feelings regarding Robbie.” This was a man that I had started dating in the spring of 1978, and we were seeing quite a bit of each other.

And then for the future, “Appointment by Governor? Running for office?” I wrote, “Mayor and Governor,” and “Depends upon what career option I choose.” So I was wide open at this point—May of 1978— knowing that I had the future in front of me and trying

to, in an *organized* way, [laughter] figure out what I was going to do.

*You were looking at whether to stay in state or leave the area?*

Yes. Yes. There was *never* a real serious thing to leave. I mean, now that got eliminated *real* quick. [laughter]

I also had a little sheet that I used to put down options, and I had a column for the summer of 1978, and then one for the fall, and then another for spring of 1979. I carried this on into other things, like setting up a business. Another option was to create my own consulting business, or something like that.

At that time, I was also active in the Library Association and planned to attend the state conference. Even though I’d lost the election, I was still on an interim committee on libraries, I think. The Equal Rights Amendment was still an issue, and I was willing to commit time to it.

One of the most *satisfying* things that I did in the late seventies was serve as a federal appointee to the Western Regional Advisory Committee to the National Parks Service. This appointment had come through Secretary of the Interior Rogers Morton. It had actually come to me while I was still a Republican, *because* I was a Republican, but the fact that I switched parties did not cause me to have to resign. Cliff Young had been on this committee representing Nevada, and then he had been in the state Senate and was a very strong environmentalist. Well, he resigned from this committee because he became the President of the National Wildlife Federation, and he didn’t have time to do both. He recommended me as his replacement, and I was appointed, and one *did* need to be a Republican: it was the Republican

administration under President Ford. And so I was appointed to represent Nevada. There were six other people on this committee representing Arizona, California, and Hawaii. I believe that was it. We met quarterly in national parks in the western region, which were those four states—Arizona, Nevada, Hawaii, and California.

This was absolutely an *incredible* experience. Every time we went to a meeting in a national park, we were wined and dined and treated as V.I.P.s, as we *were*. We were the citizen component connecting between the citizenry and the government on the management of national parks, and we conducted hearings for the National Park Service on master plans for those various parks. We were right in the middle of such issues as should boats continue to run down the Colorado River with motors on them, or should they have to be motorless? And then, some of the issues that related to national parks in Hawaii and in San Francisco—the Golden Gate National Park. Everywhere we went we were briefed by the park staff, toured the park, gave them advice from our perspective as to what they ought to be doing, and it was just an incredible experience.

I learned so much, and I brought all of that back to my experience working with state parks. In Nevada at that time we had Lake Mead and the Lehman Caves. Those were the only two national park units in the state. For Lake Mead they were developing a master plan as to how much development should be around the lake. Of course, there was a push always to create a national park at Mt. Wheeler and Lehman Caves, which came along later.

One of the most memorable trips was taking an Army helicopter, the *big* kind that they use for fire fighting, that you can get fifteen people in. We flew by helicopter from

the airport in Las Vegas to Death Valley and spent the day. We landed about four times in Death Valley and talked about the issue of the mining claims in Death Valley. That was not a national park, but a national monument, so mining was still a possibility, but it had to still have approvals. We also talked about the issue of the proliferation of the wild burros, and how in some parts of the park they were destroying all the vegetation. Well, do you try to maintain that herd at a certain level? What do you do? These are all management issues.

We landed at the visitors center and held a public hearing which was well-publicized in advance. People came from all over to tell us what they thought about Death Valley as a national monument. Then we flew back by helicopter. We were in the air, oh, an *incredible* number of hours that day, all in this helicopter, which was just a wonderful experience. That was going on in addition to all these other things, this quarterly meeting with the national parks.

*Out of those meetings, did there come any action that was particularly satisfying to you?*

All the things we worked on came to fruition in one form or another—never in the same form as the original draft, because you had input from the public. But it was a *very* positive experience, and I felt that we were useful to the park system. I felt they listened to us. And on the other hand, we became a conduit for other public opinion.

I flew to L.A. once and was the Chair of a public hearing, which I think had to do with the boats going down the Colorado River. There was no national park in L.A., but there were lots of people there who *use* the national parks, so they wanted to take the hearing to where the public was.



*What was the feeling about the boats on the Colorado River?*

It was very mixed. They still have both motors and rafts. They've tried to maintain it, but we did recommend limiting the number of commercial operators and they have done that.

My very first meeting with this group was going down the Colorado River in May, 1974, and I was the only woman on the trip. I had just been appointed. We traveled by a raft and by a motor boat, so we could experience it both ways. The superintendent of the park was on the trip; the chief biologist was on the trip; the man who is in charge of running the lower canyon—all the rafting and everything—he was on the trip. It was just this *incredible* mix of people, and we went for three days. We started at Lee's Ferry, and we ended at the Phantom Ranch and spent the night, and then came out on the burros up to the south rim.

*With your love of the outdoors, this must have been a wonderful trip for you.*

Oh, it was just a wonderful experience! When the Carter administration came in, they did away with almost all federal advisory boards. It was a financial cutback trying to create a difference from the Republican administration. Well, in my opinion, this was one of the negatives that the Democratic administration did—cut out advisory boards like this. I can certainly understand. I mean, it was costly. It cost quite a bit of money to bring our group together on a quarterly basis, and you have to weigh how much people are willing to pay taxes for these kinds of things to happen. So it ended with the Carter administration. But it was just a great experience.

[1978 was also] the summer my daughter, Carla, was working in Idaho Falls as a summer employee for the Environmental Protection Agency. She was checking air pollution monitoring stations out in some area as just a summer job. It was a full-time job to earn money to go back to college the following year.

After receiving my master's degree in May, 1978, I was just kind of intending to enjoy the summer when this group of women came to me—made an appointment, came to the house and basically said, "You have got to run for the state Senate." This was now either the last week in May or the first week in June after I graduated.

I just kind of looked at them and said, "You've got to be kidding," because in most years, to wait and decide to run in May or June would be a disaster. That's just too late. You had to file by a certain time in July—I think the first Tuesday in July. The primary wasn't until September, so then you had the summer to do your campaign. But most people who were serious about running would have declared in January or February and would be *running*—would have had all that time to build up their campaign.

So here they came, and they'd done all this thinking about it. A Senator named Ty Hilbrecht had announced he was not going to run—he was retiring. Again, this was the state Senate race where it was a multi-seat district. It alternated three and four, and in the 1976 race there were four seats, and I came in fifth. In this case, there were three seats up. One incumbent had already announced very early, named Mel Close, who actually had chaired the Judiciary Committee for years and was a strong Senator. But Ty Hilbrecht was not going to run for re-election, and he had a much more liberal image and voting record, and these people said, "You will get Ty's votes,

and we're here because we know one of the things that happened last time is that not enough people rallied around your campaign, because they didn't think you could lose. We want you to know that we are here to work on your campaign for the next five months. We're here. Tell us what we should be doing."

They felt that my being a Democrat was a plus, and we talked that morning. The idea of running again certainly intrigued me. I, for *sure*, would not want to lose, because that wouldn't be good, personally, ego-wise, to lose twice in a row. [laughter] And then, I knew I had all these strikes against me which we talked about that day, like the divorce, switching parties, and having lost the previous election.

*And at that point, the divorce would have been a negative politically?*

Well, I felt so. But I said to them, "I will think about this. I'm just at the point where this is what I was going to do—start thinking about, 'What do I want to do?' and I will move this to the top of the list, and I will spend two weeks. There are four or five things I have to know before I would seriously consider running." I don't know that I articulated them that day, but I knew what they were in my mind. And so for the next two weeks, I did.

One of the things was I had to make the political rounds—I had to play the game of calling on newspaper editors and saying, "Gee, I'm thinking about throwing my hat in the ring. What's going on?" You just kind of try to get from the people who are moving in the political stream: what are the rumors; who's likely to run; what would be my chances? It really is part of a political game that goes on.

*And you get that information from newspaper editors?*

Yes, and people who set themselves up as *gurus* in this area. I did a little bit of that. "Gee, I just finished getting my degree, thinking about running. What would you think my chances might be with what you know about what's going on?"

I got a positive response in that regard from enough people that it seemed like it wasn't too late to jump in. I knew that I had to have someone to run my campaign—to head up campaign headquarters. I had not let go of my campaign in the previous one, so I knew I had to have that. Mary Forrester was willing to be that person. I knew that I had to have somebody in charge of raising money. Raising money did not scare me now. I knew that I could raise it, and that I, personally, had to be the one that called on a lot of the people, but I had to have someone in charge of making all those advance phone calls and organizing the raising of the money. Dorothy Eisenberg said she would do that and became the Chair of my finance committee.

Other people said they would work on it. I knew that I had to have an ad agency that I could trust and felt comfortable with. At the end of two weeks, I had met with Dave Cooper of Cooper, Burch, and Howe. He was *very* excited about working on my campaign and did not have another candidate in my race, which would have been a big factor because a number of people had filed by then. I can't remember how we first became acquainted, but I liked Dave. I felt he was real down-to-earth. He would not try to push me in any direction I was uncomfortable with, and so he fell into place. I guess those were the main things. At the end of two weeks, it was all there. And so, I announced. [laughter]

I decided that's what I wanted to do—that all the rest of this stuff could wait, and that it really would be fun to get back into public office and be in the Senate. But I *knew* then

that I really had to hit the ground running, because this was the third week in June, and the first thing coming up was the Democratic primary.

I had never been in a Democratic primary before, so we just had the campaign to end all campaigns. It was just an incredible thing. People came from everywhere. We found a headquarters. We had a big blast of a campaign opening. Dorothy just worked full-time with a bunch of other people on the fundraising. We, of course, now were moving in the big time where all of these groups who gave money had to be dealt with through the evaluation and endorsement process—some of which took place in the primary and some in the general, but the money came. We had some innovative things that we did, so that the campaign was just an extraordinarily well-organized, exciting, upbeat campaign.

Come primary election day, I led the ticket on the Democratic primary for a variety of reasons. This isn't because I was God's gift to politics that year. We *worked* at it, because we knew we had to. We knew I *had* to look good coming out of the primary in order to put down this past stuff and be ready to get enough votes in the general when the Republicans [laughter] would also vote.

*Do you remember some of the things that you did, when you say you worked at it?*

Oh, yes. Right. We did innovative things that made news, and you have to be pretty different to make news in a political campaign, you know. They just don't come and cover you, unless you're doing something unusual.

*Right, because then they have to cover the other person, too.*

That's right. I'd now spent a year at the university and several years before that working on causes that related to the university, so I had a *lot* of support there. Two professors, John Swetnam in anthropology and Andy Fry in history, as I recall, said, "Why don't we create a men's advisory committee to your campaign?" And so they did. We had so much fun with this.

On August 2, 1978, the Men's Auxiliary—that's what they called it—the Men's Auxiliary to the Jean Ford Senate campaign had a kick-off membership drive at Cohen and Kelly's Bar. This was *the* bar in the big bank building downtown. The event was a no-host bar with hors d'oeuvres. Membership requirements were that you had to contribute to the campaign and volunteer to do at least *one* of the following: Walk a precinct to distribute literature; help with yard sign delivery and maintenance; participate in fundraising bake sales; receive a special membership button and meet Jean; and sign up to work in the Jean Ford campaign.

*[laughter]* And that's the membership button that you had right here that says "I'm a Ford Man?"

Yes! We used this really strong red and white and black color scheme, and this button says, "I'm a Ford Man. Men's Auxiliary. Jean Ford, state Senate District 3, Democrat."

The charter members were listed on the invitation, and there were about ten: Paul Eisenberg, a C.P.A. and the husband of the woman running the finance drive; Terry Shonkwiler, who later went on to be involved in advertising agencies in Las Vegas; Dave Cooper, who was my ad agency man; Jeff Zucker, a well-known attorney with Lionel, Sawyer, and Collins; Frank Schreck, also a well-known attorney—partner, actually

at that point, of Ty Hilbrecht who was *not* running; George Bubnis—[hmmm] I can see him, but I can't remember what he did—I think he might have been a teacher; Evan Wallach was an attorney; Charles Crunden was with the Nevada Fish and Wildlife Department; Andy Fry was a history professor at the university; Bob Dickerson—I do not remember that person; Charles Renfro—I do not remember him; Joe White was with the ad agency; and John Swetnam was the anthropology professor at the university, and he was the Chair. So they were the charter members.

Campaign headquarters was listed. This invitation was sent out *all* through town, and these guys sent it to all their friends, and the television news cameras came to this event, because it was really unusual.

*To have a men's auxiliary for a woman's campaign?*

That's right. That's right. And they did sign up, and they had buttons, and they did all that work. One other thing that they did was they had a bake sale, and they had it at a Democratic Central Committee meeting in the fall after the primary. *They* did the baking, and they got all these guys, some of whom had never baked before, and it was just *very* successful. So it was just a spark that we had fun with throughout the whole campaign.

We had *really* strong graphics. We had a postcard that said on the front, "Put Jean Ford in Her Place." And then on the back it says, "The Nevada state Senate." People used that and sent it to their friends all over the district.

On July 1, I sent a letter. So, real *quickly* we geared up with graphics, et cetera.

*You have a lot of other letters—and maybe they were drafts—but this is the first one that has*

*bold heading that matches all your campaign materials in the black and white and red.*

Absolutely. We went *really* professional. You know, we were now moving in the *big* time professional way. We had good-looking graphics in 1976, too, but my letters were still mimeographed. Now we really thought more about the look and the image of the letters I was sending.

The letterhead is, again, a really *strong* design, and it has my campaign Co-chairs and committee down the side. There's both pros and cons to putting campaign committees on the side, because people will find people they don't like in that list; that's the negative—"Oh, my God! If that person's working on her campaign, I don't want to have anything to do with it." But there's generally more positives than negatives, if you are *careful* about selecting who you put on that list. One of the main reasons we decided to put on the list is we wanted to put my ex-husband's name there and show subtly, for those who would *get* it, that he was supporting me in what I was doing. Sam Ford, M.D., is prominently displayed, and he *was* supportive. There's about fifteen or twenty people on this list.

July 1, 1978, a letter went out to people labeled "Dear Friends," and it said: "I want to personally let you know of my decision to be a Democratic candidate for the state Senate and seek your active support. Memories of the 1977 Legislature remind us of far too much emphasis on power plays among competing special interests and legislators' concerns for their own personal gain, and not enough attention given to all the people and how the government affects their money, their property and their personal rights.

"In 1979, more than ever before, the Nevada Legislature must provide strong leadership in tackling such problems as tax

reform, orderly growth, more effective crime control and improved quality of education. My years of experience are going to help us in that.

“What kind of race can I expect in Senate District 3? Only one incumbent, Mel Close, will be running, and three Senators will be elected. Other Democrats expected to file are Assemblyman Darrell Dreyer; Don Ashworth, the nephew of Senator Keith Ashworth; and Charles Waterman, attorney long active in Democratic Party circles. Others will no doubt appear before the filing closes on July 19. No Republicans have publicly stated their intent to run. Thus, my race will probably be won by one of the three candidates emerging victorious from the Democratic primary.

“As in the past, I prefer a people-to-people, grass roots approach to campaigning, but my Senate district has a staggering 90,000 plus voters, covering fourteen Assembly districts in the Las Vegas metropolitan area. This necessitates the use of major media including billboards, radio, T.V., and newspaper. Adding in the expense of brochures, postage, office supplies, and other campaign materials, I must raise a minimum of \$50,000, and the major portion of that is needed in July, as all media placement must be paid for in advance. Quite frankly, I cannot win without the active involvement of many individuals in all walks of life who want a new kind of leadership at the Nevada state Senate. The enclosed volunteer card tells of the way you can help. Please return it with your check or pledge in the self-addressed envelope.” This letter went to several hundred, if not a thousand people in July.

*Also, I'm struck that this is the first time that you directly went out asking for a large sum of money. In your earlier campaigns you took limited amounts and that sort of thing, correct?*

Right. I'm saying that I have to have \$50,000 *total*, and I'm *not* putting any limit on how much one person can give and that kind of thing. We had asked for donations, but hadn't done it quite in this manner. But we *knew* we had to have it.

As it turned out, we raised \$74,000. That was the most money that had ever been raised and spent in a state Senate campaign in Clark County. Now, you know, they had just created those districts in 1971 for the 1972 elections, so this was like the fourth election under this style of multi-seat districts for the Senate. No one had ever had to spend that kind of money to run and win before, but we just knew, for all the reasons I've given, that we needed to hit the ground running, so we did.

Mel Close, who was the only incumbent and was a very low-key, highly respected legislator and LDS, knew he didn't have to get out and campaign like gangbusters. His chances of winning were *extremely* good. He had a law practice, so he's not out doing all the things I'm doing, because he's got his law practice to run. An interesting fact, however, is that he and his wife had been divorced earlier that year, which neutralized somewhat anyone wanting to take potshots at me for my divorce status. I think Darrell Dreyer was in the race. Don Ashworth was in the race, and he did get elected at the same time I did.

The September primary—I led the ticket in that primary. Then everybody knew I was a *very serious* contender as a Democratic candidate for the state Senate.

Another thing we did that was unusual is that we called a press conference right after the primary at my headquarters and we talked about money. We had graphs that showed where my money had come from and how much of it came from fifty-dollar and below contributions; how much came from between fifty and a hundred.



We had only four or five individuals that were over five hundred, which meant that we had to declare who they were. We had *major* money from the teachers and the public employees and labor and hotels. I got money from all of the people that were giving money to campaigns—even if I wasn't their favorite, they had to have insurance. They didn't want to *not* give to the winner, and so I got money.

Now, I still might get \$2,000 from the Dunes Hotel, and maybe someone else in the race would get three or five. I often still got less. That could be for a whole range of reasons, not necessarily because I was a woman candidate. I felt *always* that it was an advantage to be a woman candidate, except in the fund-raising arena, because people really did look at the women candidates (during the seventies at least) as being more hard-working, more *willing* to give the time and energy to listen to their views, and *maybe* more honest. That stereotype of a woman candidate was there.

Now, the one thing that they still questioned was what was going to happen to their family, and so one had to kind of make sure people knew that the family would be taken care of. By now my daughters were grown. We didn't need the family picture with the dog and my husband, and people *knew* me enough. Anyway, I felt being a woman candidate was a real advantage, and it was a great campaign. We just did all the right things. [laughter] We had a *lot* of fun. We had a lot of fun.

*Now, on your campaign, I noticed that you mention tax reform, orderly growth, crime control. Were those the main things that you were working on, or were there some others that came along the way? We wanted to go back to one part of the campaign.*

We talked about how in 1976 my television ads were so bad. And one of the things I was just concerned about is, I *knew* I'd have to have television advertising, but I just felt there had to be another way to do it. Dave Cooper was just an absolute gem. We talked about my fear of what I *couldn't* do well, and how could we deal with that, and how could I be in the ads and yet not have to do this canned stuff that I wasn't good at.

What we ended up doing was, he brought the television camera to my house, and we had about six or eight people who were involved in the campaign as active supporters—men and women—and we had a conversation in my living room. The television camera recorded that conversation. It was structured to *some* degree. We had kind of an outline of some of the issues we wanted to talk about. Different people may have had a question about that issue, but how they were going to ask it and how I was going to respond—all that was totally unrehearsed. It was just as if we had got together, and some people asked some leading questions about, "Why would you want to run for the Senate again?" That would lead me into a response. I was very comfortable in that setting. I could kind of ignore the camera and be engaged in this conversation. I think it went on for a couple of hours. Out of that, Dave chose (and I was in on the decision) the final cuts of three segments. Two represented my discussion of issues—I can't remember which issues we talked about, but the third one was aimed at giving an image of trust.

We made three television commercials from those three clips. I wore a black dress with tiny white polka dots, and I had a red flower up on my lapel. And I wore that dress a lot campaigning. In fact, I think I wore it in some of the pictures that are out, too. It tied with my color scheme of the campaign. Those ads were so effective that everybody thought I

was on the news. I mean, people would come to me and say, "Gee, I saw you on the news last night." But it was my ad, because it was as if I had been interviewed by a reporter, and I was telling them something I felt strongly about.

*And yet it was relaxed and confident and all the things you wanted.*

Right. Right. It was just *excellent*. It was very well done, and added a lot to the image and the effectiveness of the campaign.

*That must have been a success for you, too, in terms of dealing with that type of publicity. You found a way that worked for you.*

Right. Right. Right.

I did not lead the ticket in the general. I think Mel Close did, because he had years of incumbency and was a highly respected Democrat, but I was in the first three. And so here I am now, headed back to Carson City.

We also sent out letters to voters in September after the primary. We talked about the number of voters, which is kind of interesting. There were then 98,733 registered voters in the district. I said, at that point in September: "I have to raise an additional \$30,000 to cover the cost of radio, television, billboards, advertising. Almost 400 individuals and businesses have already contributed from five to two thousand each, and I now appeal to those of you who have not yet given. I really need your help."

*This was to take you on from the primary into the general election?*

Right, and then this was a victory letter on December 4. It was just one page, and it said: "As the results of the November election continue to be analyzed and dissected, it

becomes increasingly apparent that our Senate District 3 victory was, indeed, a remarkable one. I say 'our' because it would not have been possible without the gifts of time, money and talent from so many willing volunteers. It is a well-known fact the Jean Ford campaign was, and still is, the talk of the town. While I was out there from June to November shaking hands, voicing my concerns, raising money and asking for votes, your enthusiastic backup helped make the victorious difference. Literally hundreds of you responded when I announced my candidacy: reporting to headquarters week after week; walking your precinct in hundred-degree heat; baking your first cake for the Men's Auxiliary bake sale; passing out brochures everywhere; and pounding yard signs all over town. I was the envy of every campaign in town, as the 'Jean Machine' . . ."—and that's what they called it—" . . . continued to grow in strength and effectiveness.

"Primary election night told us we had put together a winning combination and made believers out of those who shook their heads at our number one spot in all the pre-primary polls. And then, we had the big hurdle. Needless to say, November 7 was a grand and glorious night, and I now look forward to representing you in the Legislature beginning January 15. I'll be in Carson December 13 to attend a pre-session orientation . . ."—one of those reforms I had worked on—" . . . and receive my committee assignments. My daughter, Carla, and I will be spending Christmas with daughter, Janet, in Paris, where she's dancing in the 'Lido'. And here's my phone number how I can be reached in Carson City."

Earlier that year, Jan was at the Stardust and real unhappy, and she called Donn Arden, and he said, "Why don't you come to

Paris?” She’d been there less than a year. The Christmas before was when she opened in the Stardust, because I remember going to the opening of the “Lido” with her in it around Christmas time. So she went to Paris in the spring while I was graduating. Here she is in Paris, and I now have this time that I can go. Carla was a student up at Reed College in Portland. She came home, and we went to Paris for two weeks. Carla actually had a classmate at Reed, who was from Greece and who had family in Greece. She went on and met him in Greece and then came back to the states separately. In fact, we came and went separately, but we were *together* for about ten days in Paris with Jan.

*And this was your first trip to Paris for you?*

Yes, right—my *only* trip to Paris. And it was wonderful. I traveled by myself, and she met me at the airport. She lived in an old brownstone, dingy looking apartment that was in a three-story building where they were all stacked right next to each other in downtown Paris. All three stories had once been one home, and now every floor was a separate apartment. The floor she lived on had gotten the original bathroom, and so this was an *incredibly* luxurious bathroom. I mean, it was big enough to sleep in. It was a *huge* bathroom with a tub and all kinds of amenities. But the kitchen had not been on that floor, so the kitchen that they had with their apartment was like in a closet that had been just stuck in—just the elements that the owner could figure out to put in a minimum for a kitchen. [laughter] And then, you had a beautiful bedroom and a beautiful living room—I think there were three rooms. Then this little closet kitchen and this *luxurious* bath. So it was a really funny thing. The upper floor would be a totally different

configuration—no bath, but a wonderful kitchen [laughter] or something like that. She had one or two roommates.

For the ten days we were there, we spent several nights at the show and part of it down in the dressing room where she got ready. Janet was one of the principals in the show. She had a different dressing room than the run-of-the-mill dancers. Over there, they had to put body makeup on; they don’t do that in Las Vegas, but in Paris they *all* did. They had sponges with body makeup, and the first thing they had to do was just strip down and put that body makeup over their entire body, and then put their costume on from there, so it took them awhile to do that. I spent several nights in the dressing room watching the entire process, and then I would go up and be at a booth—front and center—to watch the performance of the “Lido” with other friends, or people that happened to be there, or part of the management, or whatever.

One night was the birthday of one of the producers of the show. After the show, they had a party at two in the morning, where they put on a show for him. The guys were in drag, and this was just *incredible* creativity. After they’d already done a whole day’s work, they put on this birthday party for this producer, and I was there for that.

There were performers from all over the world—a lot of English girls, *not* too many Americans, a lot of French. I was just treated royally by the “Lido” management and staff. When Carla came, she did that one or two nights with me, too. We went to a sherry party at the home of one of the male dancers who was from England. For him, a tradition was sherry, fruitcake and little pot pies, and things like that. So we did that.

Then we had Christmas dinner in her apartment for probably about twelve, and these were the show kids that Jan decided

to invite. My challenge was how to use this kitchen to create Christmas dinner. I had all these orders from my daughters, like green beans slow cooked with bacon and onion. This is one of their favorites that I had learned from my aunt, so we had to have green beans. Then we had to have all these other things and then the turkey, and the oven was only big enough for one thing. So you could do dressing, or you could do turkey, or you could do a casserole, [laughter] or you could do pie, but you could only get one thing in there. I think we ended up doing turkey breasts on top of the stove or something, and then putting other things and sweet potatoes in the oven. But shopping and getting all this ready, and then other people who came brought food that was traditional from *their* home at Christmas—it was just this *incredible* spread of food, and that was just loads of fun.

Janet was able to take about three days off, and we rented a car, and we went to the coast. We drove to Brittany, out to the coast to some of the historic places. We went to Mont-St.-Michel—the island that tide water separates from the mainland. We came back through the middle of France to the town that has the Chartres Cathedral, one of the large cathedrals. We just had a *great* time. There were like four of us—my daughter, Janet, a friend of hers, and then my other daughter, Carla, and myself. The weather was gloomy, rainy. It was not at all user-friendly, but that didn't stop us.

We went to the Louvre and we did some sightseeing. Carla and I did some of that while Jan was sleeping or doing things that related to her work. It was just a wonderful two weeks. We took the train out to Versailles and enjoyed the palace and just did wonderful things. We went to a lot of different restaurants, one of which was run by a man that Jan had known and had dated quite a bit, and he was from

Syria. This was a Near Eastern restaurant, and we just had an *incredible* dinner there. He brought all of these—it was really the hors d'oeuvres—all of the advance dishes and the appetizers. I thought it was the whole meal. Then we ate that to the point that when he was going to bring entrées, I about died. He came and visited us in Las Vegas later when Jan came back and was in “Jubilee” for ten or twelve years. We took him to Caesar's Palace and had a big dinner for him when he came to Las Vegas. We met a *lot* of people over there that did eventually travel over to Las Vegas.





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SENATOR IN 1979 AND 1981

So that was Christmas in Paris. *Then* I was back into the world of politics in January of 1979. I was the only woman in the Senate that session. I was well received, on the surface anyway. Once you get elected, even your enemies respect the fact. It's like being in battle together, [laughter] which it *is*. Even those who don't agree with you philosophically respect the fact that you *got* there the same way they did, by sticking your neck out and putting your name on the line and taking the risk. They respect you when you win, and then the battles start, and you start disagreeing on issues.

*But at least you've paid your dues by the time you get there?*

That's right. That's right.

It made a *great* deal of difference for me to be now in the majority party. The Democrats had control of the Senate, and I was a Democrat. There were enough Democrats with seniority that I was not even in the running to chair a committee, because there

were too many old timers around for that. Senator James Gibson was acknowledged as one of the most powerful members of the Senate. Well, there was *always* a toss up between Gibson and Lamb, and Mahlon Brown had retired by that time, so he was no longer there. People like Carl Dodge who was in the Senate then; he was a Republican. Lawrence Jacobsen was in the Senate—had moved over from the Assembly—and was a Republican. Spike Wilson and Cliff Young were there; Spike was a Democrat, and Cliff was a Republican. Joe Neal, who had been elected the same year I was elected to the Assembly, was the first black person elected to the state Senate and was still there. These are really *well-known*, outstanding men in the state.

Senator Gibson and I had been at each other's throats—politically speaking, strategically speaking—on almost any social welfare issue and certainly the Equal Rights Amendment and abortion. Yet, probably more than most members of the Senate and the Assembly, he and I had *total* agreement

on our goals for good government in Nevada. We both really agreed on a lot of the basics. He was slower to come with some of the reforms that Joe Dini and I worked on, but even some of those he acknowledged were needed. You couldn't get a lot on *without* his acknowledging that they were needed. He was probably the most powerful man in the Senate at that point in time.

*That's a good example of what you said earlier, that at some point you're going to agree on some issue with almost everybody there.*

That's right. You can't write anybody off. So here I am now, in a new setting with the majority in the Senate. Senator Gibson made me the Vice-Chair of Government Affairs. He was the Chair, but he made me the Vice-Chair. Now that was a *true* compliment to me and gave me a considerable amount of power because he did that. He didn't *have* to make me the Vice-Chair; we were acknowledged enemies on *many* things. But the fact that I was there as a freshman Senator and he still made me the Vice-Chair and put me on that committee was just a real nice thing to have happen.

*Was this your first position where you really, truly felt like you had some power among your colleagues, or had you felt like you had power in the Assembly as you were serving on the committees?*

Well, the whole power issue had evolved in my mind largely in the 1975 session and then I lost the next election, so I hadn't really had a chance to operate in a mode where I felt I had power, let's say, until now—[laughter] until 1979, as far as the Legislature went. I was *much* more at ease with the system. I was more confident in my ability to take risks or be a

leader, to take the initiative on things. Being in the majority party helped. A majority of my colleagues were also Democrats. So even though people don't vote party line all the time, sometimes it helps.

I had learned quite a bit about a lot of things. I had grown up quite a bit in my ability to function as a colleague in the Senate. I was received, I would say, very well. People knew that I worked hard, that I knew what I was talking about most of the time, that I was capable of strategizing and organizing support or opposition for things. Serving on Government Affairs was, of course, always one of my favorite kinds of things. I did that working with Jim Gibson, and I was there for both the 1979 and 1981 sessions.

In the 1981 session, a big issue was reapportionment, which we were in charge of. I was on the subcommittee that did a lot of the advance work on the reapportionment maps and redistricting based on the 1980 census. One of the things that Senator Gibson gave me to take charge of was the legislation consolidating the police departments in Clark County, headed by the sheriff in the county and the metropolitan police chief in the city. This was part of consolidation that had been talked about for years. It finally got to a point where everybody agreed it was time for that to happen, so we knew some kind of bill would probably be able to come out. I think the employee groups—the unions and all that—were supportive of it; but how it was going to look and all the details—there was a *lot* of negotiating, a lot of compromise that had to take place. I chaired that subcommittee appointed by Senator Gibson to get those forces together and, along with our staff, to arrive at what were plausible answers for that bill. So that was a major thing I worked on.

The Displaced Homemaker Bill was a big issue in the 1979 session. By this

time, Sue Wagner was still serving in the Assembly and had gotten appointed to the Ways and Means Committee. You *always* have more power if you're on the money committee, and she was determined to make the Displaced Homemaker Bill a reality. Anyone on those committees gets, during the session, at least *one* bill that is just their own personal favorite. They somehow let it be known what that is, and it's a perk for being on that committee, because there's *always* not enough money to go around, and you're going to have to cut a lot of pet projects and ideas. But everybody on those committees has a pet project that doesn't get cut. Well, for Sue, it was first the Displaced Homemaker Bill and then later domestic violence. That's one of the things that happens when a *woman* gets on those committees. Rarely would you find a *man* giving those kinds of issues high enough priority that they would use their perk bill to get a woman's program funded like that. This was happening with Sue, because she was on the money committee.

I think it was 1981 that Jan Evans came with the Domestic Violence Bill. The Committee to Aid Abused Women had been formed by Joanie Kaiser—with the help of a lot of others including her mother, Phyllis—and they needed a base of funding. Jan, as a volunteer lobbyist, brought the Domestic Violence Bill to the Legislature and bird-dogged it the entire session. I mean, she was an *incredible* lobbyist. I think it started in the Senate, where Sue was by now, and she could kind of mother it through. Then it went to the Assembly, and I spent a lot of time working on it also from the Senate side, so that was a big issue that session. Of course, Jan Evans later went on to run for the Legislature and has been in it ever since and is on Ways and Means herself now, which is great.

I also was appointed to Judiciary, which was a whole new experience for me. We actually had *very* few attorneys in the Senate in that session, and the majority of people on the Judiciary Committee were non-lawyers. Mel Close chaired it, and people like Carl Dodge were on it, who does have a law degree but has never been a practicing attorney. There were also a group of us on the committee who were not lawyers, and I enjoyed that *very*, very much—being on Judiciary. Mel Close was a fabulous Chair, and again, even on issues that we disagreed on philosophically, he was good about giving me equal time and letting me do my thing.

OK. *Why was the Judiciary Committee of interest to you?*

Well, the Judiciary Committee had all the bills related to crime and punishment, had all the bills related to gaming. It had all the bills related to the court system—the juvenile court—which I'd done a *lot* of work on through the League, and I'd never served on a committee that dealt with those bills. It's a very substantial committee. A lot of great policy questions go through that committee. A lot of things like child adoption and those kinds of bills went to Judiciary. The Equal Rights Amendment went to Judiciary. Anything that amended the constitution would go to Judiciary. So it was a powerful committee, and to be on that and Government Affairs both was exciting. Of course, there were only twenty people in the Senate, so everybody had big workloads.

The third committee that I had was Legislative Functions, which, of course, was my *love* as far as the legislative process went. By that time a lot of the bills had passed that we wanted, and the ones that hadn't, weren't ever going to pass in our lifetime. [laughter]

The work of that committee had changed quite a bit. But anyway, it was a great assignment of committees.

Other issues that were really big that session included the Sagebrush Rebellion. This was the beginning of Dean Rhoads's leadership on this issue. He was the Assemblyman from Elko, and he stirred up the whole idea—as did many other ranchers all over the West—that the government was not treating them right with the grazing laws, and all the things they were doing with the public lands. It was the whole idea that Nevada ought to have its public lands turned back over to the state—that the public lands should become state lands and let the state run them; just *anti-federal* government kinds of stuff. This was the big movement. He had a lot of support. A national organization was formed, and they met in all the western states and had a big bandwagon going on all this. So he introduced bills to memorialize Congress to give Nevada back its land, and probably talked about other western states as well.

I just thought that was a terrible idea. We were no more able to manage all those lands than the man in the moon. What *they* wanted was to be able to not have to pay grazing fees and be able to send their cattle where they wanted to, which was *one* issue. But all these public lands . . . you could just *see* all the developers getting them up for grabs and creating land sales and trying to develop subdivisions. We didn't have a structure in place to monitor it. What would we do with these lands if we got them? What about state planning? Were we just going to let every county commission in the state run away with how they wanted to handle these lands? It would have been terrible. I spoke out *very* strongly against this, as did Cliff Young. I think we were the only two, really, in that

session. Now, it's still an issue. There were others who joined us on some of those kinds of issues, but I just felt very strongly against it and spoke very strongly on the floor.

Another issue that came up *every* session was abortion, in some way. Senator Gibson just really was going to see that women could not get abortions in Nevada, in spite of *Roe v. Wade*, the Supreme Court decision. I believe in 1979 he had a different tactic that he'd try, and I think it was that session that he proposed a constitutional amendment that life began with conception. Now this was an issue that the Supreme Court had *not* dealt with in *Roe v. Wade*, so the whole question of when life begins was still legally up in the air. One way to solve it would be to put in our constitution that life begins at the point of conception. That would be a much *stronger* position for anti-abortion people to have. That would be a strong argument against abortion—your not wanting to take life.

*Yes. How did that play out during that session?*

In 1979, it was A.J.R. 17, and it was calling on Congress to enforce the right to life of the fetus person. I believe it *did* pass both houses. And then immediately Planned Parenthood would file an injunction, because they would find it unconstitutional in some way, and the issue would be held up in court while they tried to determine whether there would be a stay put on it by the court. Well, as for memorializing Congress . . . as long as Congress didn't pass it, it wasn't going to be law.

There were different techniques used in each of the sessions on this issue, moving down to into the recent years. Anti-abortion legislators are still trying to get on that you have to have parental consent, which was never addressed by *Roe v. Wade* either, and

that *can* be done by a state. A state could pass a parental consent law, and that was tried.

Anything that Jim Gibson introduced on this would pass, because of his power and because the majority, philosophically, agreed with him, but it was an issue I could not agree with him on. I found a copy of my testimony that I gave before the Senate Judiciary Committee in 1979 regarding that amendment, and I have just three short paragraphs, which I think summarize where I was coming from at that point. Now, recall that I had personally had an abortion, but still did not feel that I could *ever* disclose that as a part of my testimony.

*So it was not public knowledge at this point?*

No. I said, “Government has never stopped abortion, and no law ever will. Laws can only succeed in making it dangerous or inconvenient or expensive for those who make that choice. I feel that women are going to determine their reproductive lives as they wish. This is the essence of dignity and personal freedom.”

And, of course, I had experienced all of that. It had been *dangerous*, it had been inconvenient and it had been expensive, but I did it. I knew that I would have done it no matter what, as much as was possible for me to do. Then, in the testimony I said, “I treasure my daughters, as *all* children should be treasured. Women should not have to bear children because they are accidents or duties or someone else’s expectations. I am not pro-abortion. I am not anti-life. I am for each woman’s right to make this decision for herself.”

That was my testimony. I repeated this in a *Roe v. Wade* anniversary event in Wingfield Park in Reno some years later, where I also added that I had personally had an abortion

and I talked about it at that time. We talked about the fact that a pro-choice advocacy, which is what I was proclaiming, had to be a year-round lifetime advocacy and had to include birth control education. Abortion is *never* anyone’s first choice, so what can we do to avoid ever being in that situation? We’re right back to education and alternatives.

*Thinking about your testimony, did you ever second-guess your decision not to make your abortion publicly known? From your perspective today, does that still seem like it was the right decision for that time?*

Oh, yes. It would be too dramatic. It would be too . . . I felt it would *hurt* me for people to know. Personally, I felt very comfortable in my convictions and what I had done, but I *was* a political animal, you know. [laughter] And I didn’t think it would help the cause for me to do that. It would divert attention somehow.

*And, in fact, maybe undermine some of your power?*

That’s right. That it would be *too* sensational. It would be too whatever—that it wouldn’t help. If I really felt it would have helped the cause, I would have done it, but at that point I didn’t feel it would. So that was an issue. In fact, that was an issue in *both* 1979 and 1981.

I’ve mentioned what Jim Gibson did in 1979. I’m not sure what the bill was in 1981, but it was another abortion bill that was just wrong, in my opinion. It was the closing days of the session, and I was opposed to it as were several others, but he knew he had the majority. My daughter was graduating from Reed College, and the session was getting on into a point where I was either going to have to not go to her graduation, or I was not going



to be at the session for like a whole day and a half. This is a bad, bad decision. The end of the session there is just *lots* of stuff going on. Well, I chose to go to the graduation. It was over a weekend and the abortion bill was coming up for debate and vote, so another thing I knew is that I would likely not be there for that.

Senator Gibson postponed the abortion bill in deference to my being out of town, so that I would be there when it came up on the floor. Now, this politically was a smart move on his part. It made him look good. He knew he had the votes. He knew it was going to go the way he wanted, but it was nice of him to wait until the chief opponent of his bill was there. It was a courtesy that he could afford to give, and he did. So they postponed the bill until I was back in the chambers, and then we proceeded. Those of us who were against spoke against, and those who were for it voted for it, and it passed, and we went on. But that's just kind of an interesting commentary on the inside picture of how the Legislature works.

*Yes. There's certain protocol and courtesy and respect.*

Protocol and courtesy that's kind of unspoken. These aren't rules that are written down anywhere, but they do happen and it's interesting.

On the other hand, I saw him on the abortion bill one session—I can't remember which. I think it might have been 1977, because I was not in the Legislature but I was *observing* in the Senate when this happened. The bill passed the Assembly—an abortion bill that was pro-choice. It came to the Senate as an emergency measure, because they can do that. If you don't make an emergency measure, the next day it ends up on the desk of the Senate with the staff, and they put it on the list, and it starts through its whole process

over on the Senate side. The majority leader gets up and moves the bill to a committee, where it's now going to get heard in that house, and just the whole process proceeds. Toward the end of the session, or if one has any particular reason for wanting to, they can get up after a bill has passed the Assembly and say, "I move that this bill be transmitted forthwith to the Senate as an emergency measure," which means they want to get it out of the house *right then*, and move it to the Senate either for immediate action or at least to not delay for a whole day its getting over there.

In this case, it was almost like a psychological thing. The Assembly was sick and tired of dealing with this abortion bill, which they just struggled with, and there weren't any right answers, and you couldn't keep everybody happy. They wanted to get rid of the bill. So this abortion bill passed that had *stronger* rights for women than what was in the law at that time, and it went over to the Senate as an emergency measure. Within a half hour, Senator Gibson was notified by somebody that the bill had come over. It could have been an aide of his—somehow he knew that bill had come over. He got up and moved that bill "no further consideration."

Now, this is a parliamentary maneuver that is legal. There is no debate. You vote, and the vote passed. Within a half hour, he had circumvented the whole process—he did not allow the bill to go to committee and have hearings and come back to the floor or not, or be killed in committee or not. He did not want that bill, and he had enough power that when he made the motion, enough people in the Senate knew that he wanted that bill killed right then, and they went along with him.

It was killed. The motion was that we give this bill "no further consideration," and we have to vote yes or no without debate.

This motion to kill the bill passed. The bill *never* got introduced in the Senate. It was killed on the Senate floor. Well, it was in the Senate by virtue of having been sent over, but it was never given the due process that the *rules* call for. The rule would have been that they would have announced that this bill has arrived as an emergency measure, and then he would have gotten up and moved it to the Judiciary Committee, or Health and Welfare, or whatever committee was going to take it up. Instead, he chose to kill it right then. So one can do that. [laughter]

Every year there was an abortion bill of some kind that those of us who felt women deserved more choice in this process would either work toward, or there would be a very *onerous* bill, like parental consent, that we would work to kill. And this one was obviously something that would have helped women with their right to choose.

*That's how strong a foe you had on the abortion issue during that time?*

Well, *yes*. Yes, and it just was always a very emotional time.

*For you?*

For everybody. [laughter] Everybody!

*I was going to say, was there a lot of public debate that went along with this, as it was going through each year?*

Oh, yes! Oh, yes. There were support groups and anti groups. Nationally, the National Abortion Rights Action League, called NARAL, became a national force in abortion rights all over the country. There was never a NARAL chapter formed in Nevada, *per se*, but there were thousands of Nevadans

that joined it as a national organization. It sent money to pro-choice candidates at election time, and Planned Parenthood became very involved in all kinds of things related to the abortion issue. Church groups took sides. There were just *many*, many advocacy groups, pro and con, that endorsed candidates or not at election time based on their declaring where they stood on that issue, although in southern Nevada there were fewer people who voted solely on that issue at the polls. I mean, obviously I got support from a lot of people who didn't agree with me on the abortion issue, but that wasn't the overriding issue that would cause them to decide how to vote.

In northern Nevada, it appeared to be much stronger—your position on abortion was going to dictate whether people voted for you or not in either party. People like Sue Wagner and other pro-choice people in the north always stood a *major*, major risk by positions that they took. But also, they *won*. [laughter] Some won and some lost. That was more of an issue in northern Nevada that would make or break an election than I think it ever was in the south. And there was a stronger opposition. Janine Hansen, who headed up the Eagle Forum and still does—which was the anti-E.R.A., anti-women's rights, anti-abortion group—was in northern Nevada and had a *very* strong grass roots organization.

As I said, I felt really comfortable and well-accepted in the Senate. It's still a struggle for power, but I felt like I played much more of an *equal* role in the process and in what was going on.

An interesting thing that had evolved from the early days of getting involved in the Assembly was how I changed my attitude toward the importance of how I dressed. One of the things I had learned over about a six-year period was about the messages that you

send by what you wear. [laughter] It became more and more apparent to me that that was the case, to the point that I read a lot of books about it, and there were several books out during that period of time.

This was also this kind of *emerging* of women in the women's movement now. The whole politics of dress was an issue that was being written about in national magazines and talked about in campaign materials. I've always loved clothes, and I've always put a lot of money into clothes—not really expensive clothes. I preferred to have *more* than *better*. [laughter] I preferred *volume* over high, high quality, but I loved clothes. I loved dressing and feeling like I looked well and getting reactions from people that told me that I looked well.

I can look back to the early days of the Assembly and *know* that I dressed for those guys to some degree. Those comments that they made—that, “Wow! Look what you've got on *today*,” kind of thing—made me feel good. That was a positive to me, at that point in time. Of course, I'm trying to sort out how to be “one of the guys,” to some degree, how to fit in, how to *get along*. I mean, that's the big thing. “How do you get along?” Because you need their help. You need their support to get on your priorities. You *need* to develop good relationships with your colleagues. One way I saw myself doing that was to dress in a way that *attracted* them. This was the days when it was first OK to wear pantsuits and scarves. I loved wearing scarves, and I loved coordinating my clothes in bright colors. I just remember that as a part of who I was.

Well, by the time I got to the Senate in 1979, I knew that if what you wore attracted so much attention, you were likely to lose their ability to listen to your message. You needed to wear things that did *not* attract attention as an end in themselves and *particularly* not

attract them as a heterosexual come-on of any kind. What I had been doing in the Assembly had, in fact, *done* that. I mean, there was what some might call flirting. I was asking for it, because of the way I dressed and the way I acted to some degree. By the time I got to the Senate, I knew that that was not the way to be effective, and I was wearing gray flannel blazers and pleated skirts and conservative blouses. Now the whole fashion world had changed some by then, too, but I dressed more like the guys dressed. It was business. I was there on very serious work. I wanted them to hear what I had to say and not get distracted by my *body* or my clothes. That was part of my being more effective—my doing that.

When I created this for-profit company later with friends in the early eighties, we did workshops. One of the workshops we did for people was called “The Politics of Dress.” We reviewed the current writings of the day about what was considered appropriate and what wasn't. It all went back to the idea that the key to good fashion sense was to first know who *you* are and what your values are and what you're trying to convey—what kind of message are you trying to send—and this works for the workplace anywhere.

But for me, it was a very male workplace. It was the Nevada state Senate. I mean, it can't *get* much more of a male bastion than that. So what role did I want to play to achieve my goals, what message did I want to send to convey that role, and how does dress affect that message? That meant I matched my wardrobe to the answers to those questions, which was that I wanted to be taken *seriously* as a policy maker. And so—I was.

The test site was a big issue. The whole nuclear waste issue. Actually, it had been an issue in like 1975 I think. That was the first time there was actually a resolution in the

Assembly memorializing Congress to create more jobs at the test site, so that Nevadans would have more jobs. It was a come-on for the federal government to do *anything* it wanted at the test site.

You look back at this, and you say, “My gosh! What was going on there?” particularly with the anti-nuclear waste stance that most of the people in the state have today, which is led by our two U.S. Senators. But in 1975 that resolution was an economic thing, just saying, “We don’t care what they do at the test site. We just want jobs.” I voted against that resolution. I was one of the *few* people that voted against that resolution.

*Could you see then what it was opening up, or did you suspect it?*

Well, I didn’t see all the significance of it, but I just felt it was not wise. I hadn’t thought through all the options, all the significance of the test site. By 1981 there was a *lot* going on. Hank Greenspun, personally, had taken on this cause of being anti-nuclear waste, and any politician who cared about their future really thought twice about going against Hank Greenspun during those years in Las Vegas. The position he took on issues had a *tremendous* amount of power over people. He was editor/owner of the *Las Vegas Sun*.

For the most part, by 1981 most people were on the bandwagon to oppose nuclear waste, and I was in that position, too. *However* in the 1981 session, Greenspun got a bill introduced in the Assembly that had a couple of other things in the bill by the time it got to the Senate. It was not well thought out. It was a very *extreme* measure of some kind that had to do with the test site, and he just insisted that it pass and was dealing with the people in the Assembly and just saying, “This bill has to pass.” These guys and women were so afraid

of him that they passed the bill even though it was a bad bill.

If it passed both houses, it would really affect some of the water pollution laws in the state in a negative way. It affected things that Hank didn’t even care about, but all he said was, “I want this bill passed!” And it was one that—at least the test site part—he had gotten written. Well, it came to the Senate in the closing days, and the word we had from the Assembly was, “It’s a *bad* bill,” so I voted against it.

Now at the same time in those closing days, I got a message—as we get hundreds of messages in the closing days—to call Hank Greenspun, and I never returned his call. That set me up for bad trouble. He was *so* angry that I never returned his phone call.

*Did you do it purposefully?*

Well, I *didn’t*. I mean, it was like you make decisions. You’ve got twenty-five phone calls, and you’ve got half an hour in which to make them. Which ones do you call? I already knew what I was going to do on that bill. So I guess I *did* kind of, in a way. I opted to give other people higher priority, not really thinking through the political consequences—that I, at least, ought to return his phone call. But I knew what it was going to be about.

Joe Neal also voted against the bill. There were a couple of other people, and immediately there was an editorial written in which we were just really raked across the coals. But then he didn’t stop there. He had a column called, “Where I Stand,” and he wrote in this column and he wrote two different columns directed at me and what a *horrible* legislator I was and all the things I’d done wrong and how arrogant I was on this position. They were just awful, nasty columns.

Of course, that's the kind of thing that you *never* get used to. No one who's been in public office can avoid being hurt by things that happen. You have to be willing to take that kind of thing when you're there. You never get used to people doing things to you which unfairly question your motives. That's the hardest to take, is when you know people are deliberately *setting* you up for something that wasn't true—that isn't true—but they have their own political agenda and you're a public figure and you've got to take it.

I was so upset that I replied to his first "Where I Stand." Well, you *never* win replying to the press. They always have the last word. So all that did was give him fuel for another column. This would have been in June of 1981. I mean, he just took after me like everything. He would not let go.

Well, that introduces another whole element of my life that had happened during the time I was in the state Senate. That is the fact that I had gone to work for money in between sessions, because I needed a job. I mean, I now had finished my master's degree. I was in the Senate, but that certainly wasn't going to pay me; I couldn't make a living being in the state Senate, so I had to find work.

I had gone to work in the summer of 1979. I started looking for positions in the spring, while I was in the session, and what evolved for me was really a position right back at the library district that I had first helped form in the early sixties. By this time it was a very large district—had a beautiful library on Flamingo Road, had a large staff and was just really booming. It was doing well, and they had a position called Community Relations that had been held by a man named Lamar Marchese, who had come to town to take that position and also had a life-long dream of starting a public radio station, which he ended up doing while he was in this position at the library.

That became the public radio station in Las Vegas. He eventually got the F.C.C. [Federal Communications Commission] approval and the capital to underwrite the station, and he then left the library position to become the director/ founder of the public radio in Las Vegas, and he's still there. They needed someone to take his place as Community Relations at the library.

Well, this was *really* down my alley. I interviewed and got the job, which was functioning under the Director, Charles Hunsberger. I did things like put out their monthly newsletter about what was happening at the library in terms of community programming. There was someone else that organized the programming, but I put out the newsletter and the schedule of events. Working directly with the Library Director put me on his main executive staff. He had a great team of people and encouraged initiative and creativity. I had been on a Legislative Committee to study libraries, and right then is when libraries were getting attention all over the state. The White House Conference on Libraries was happening. I played a leadership role in that before I took the job with the library district, so I was a known library advocate in all kinds of ways.

We started working on a bond issue that would allow more libraries to be built, so I started working on the campaign for a "yes" vote on that district-wide bond issue. All of that just fit with all my skills that I had built through the League and my love of libraries. I trained people in the library district on how to get public support for libraries, and I had that position for a year and a half. I left the 1979 legislative session in late May or early June, and I went to work in July for the library.

Now, I was still a state Senator, but everybody in the state Senate has a conflict of interest. Everybody works—makes their



money—some other way, unless you are a housewife, which I had been when I was in the Assembly. Now I was a working woman, and I enjoyed that *very* much, and I continued with that. I was on interim committees that had to do with other kinds of things. And, of course, they let me schedule my time so that I could be a state Senator when I needed to be a state Senator. It was to their advantage to have me in my library position and be a state Senator at the same time. It brought more visibility to libraries, so it was kind of a win-win situation for a year and a half. I had a job that paid me money, now I could really begin to look at some of these other options, career-wise. I didn't have to run in the next election. I was in the Senate for another whole two years without running a campaign in between, which was an *incredible* luxury.

At the end of the 1979 session, a piece of legislation that was introduced during that session Commission. Many states around the country were doing that at that time. States had been through all this legislative reform. The ability of state government to lead, as opposed to the federal government, was a big issue all across the country, and many states were looking at themselves as to their ability to take charge of their own lives as state governments.

Minnesota had particularly done an outstanding job with their commission on the future of the state, so a bill was introduced and ultimately passed to do something similar in Nevada. The commission itself was fifteen or twenty people, as I recall, but the Senate could appoint two people from the Senate, and the Speaker of the Assembly could appoint two people from the Assembly. I *really* wanted to be on that, because that was my kind of thing—organizing and looking at the future of Nevada in a systematic way and in a broad way.

I was appointed by Senator Lamb. We had had our ups and downs in terms of our relationships to each other. [laughter] I think he considered this kind of a throw-away appointment. He was willing to give it to me. Not a lot of others wanted it. It was going to take a *lot* of time. Whoever did it was going to have to be at innumerable sessions, and most of the guys worked—had jobs outside the Legislature to make a living. So anyway, I got the appointment, and I then served on that.

Governor List was the Governor, and it was his baby. His office supervised and hired the staff. The commission had some input in that. We had a *lot* of input in how we wanted to organize our work, and it was a very broad-based group. It turned out to be a *terribly* frustrating experience. We proposed legislation to be considered in 1981 in a huge report on the future of Nevada, and did an incredible amount of good work, but nobody took it seriously. The Governor—even after we made recommendations to List—did not choose to implement or to bring them to the 1981 session. That wasn't at all high on his priority list—to use this tool—and it was such a wonderful tool, politically, if nothing else. It just wasn't there for him.

Actually, just to follow that line of thought for a minute, it was a positive experience in that I loved doing the work. I loved seeing what other states had done and applying it to Nevada, particularly making sure that libraries and the arts—all those things I cared about—were looked at equally as much as economic development. We were looking at the whole life of the state. This was one of the things . . . I was so disappointed at Governor List and his lack of interest in taking this wealth of information and work and not seeing some value in *using* it at the 1981 session.

I can't remember how it started. Somebody talked him into feeling it was a good idea, but then he never followed through on it. He let the group function. It had a *huge* budget. It took a lot of money to bring all these people together for a year and a half, and there was paid staff and everything, but it just wasn't there—that long-range planning and following through on it wasn't important to him, *nor* was it important to a lot of the legislators. So it was a struggle to get anything in the 1981 session out from that report.

A lot of compromises were made. The report's an inch thick and talks about everything under the sun, but the final compromise to the recommended legislation was still worthwhile, and some *very* minor things came out of it in the 1981 session.

*What happens to all those reports? Do they still exist?*

Oh, yes. The Legislative Counsel Bureau, which is the staffing organization for the Legislature—a year-round, very competent, non-partisan staff—it's their business to maintain those records and files. Eventually, they go to the state archives. There's a plan based on years. Once documents became a certain age, then they become part of the archives. But yes, they are retrievable, and are in many of the libraries around the state in their government documents section.

One of the neat pieces of legislation that was passed in the seventies, I think, created a series of repositories in eighteen libraries around the state—the state library, the two big university libraries, and then certain other public libraries. Eighteen libraries in all were designated repositories for state government information, so any state document that was created, eighteen copies were supposed to go to the state library, which would then distribute

those among those eighteen libraries. All of those are government information centers for the public, and they should all have things like the Futures Commission Report.

*And when you think back on that report, is there still information in it that would be of help or of value today?*

It would be interesting to go back and look at it and see what we recommended and how much of it has been addressed by anybody since then. I'm sure quite a bit of it *has*, in one form or another.

*Even though it didn't come out in that next session?*

Right. Some of the basic needs for the future, like good planning, planning and prevention, are the worst things to fund. I mean, nobody wants to fund planning or prevention. It's *really* hard, because you can't see anything tangible as a result. You can buy trucks, and you can [laughter] build buildings, and all that kind of stuff, and you feel like you've *got* something for your money. But planning and prevention are just tough, and the Futures Commission had a lot to do with planning. How were we going to handle orderly growth? It would be interesting, now that we look at Las Vegas—and as far as that goes, Reno—what are we doing? Did we have some wise advice back in 1980 that we could have followed here? I don't know. Be fun to go back and look at it.

Work on the Futures Commission took up a significant amount of my time in between the 1979 and 1981 sessions.

In a letter to constituents that I sent in June right after the 1979 session, one of the *last* things I said in it was that, "An exciting new

development is that I have accepted a full-time position beginning in August of Community and Public Relations Coordinator with the Clark County Library District. I'm looking forward to this new challenge. On your next visit to the library, look me up. I'm available to speak to club meetings and sit down with you and your neighbors to discuss continuing and new problems." I thanked everybody for their support, and I made sure, at the end, that people knew that the printing and postage costs for this mailing were covered by campaign contributions remaining from the 1978 election campaign account. And, "Isn't it nice that we don't have to think of another campaign until 1982," because this was a real *luxury* to be in a four-year term and not have to work on the election.

*So really, at this point you had the library job, and this was your decision to go to work. Do you want to talk about that a little bit before you go into the 1981 session?*

Right. All along, from the time that my husband and I were divorced, I had this feeling that it would just be the normal, *right* thing to do, to go to work for money. [laughter] To try to get my ex-husband to support me didn't seem a good idea at all. I felt very capable of going to work for money. I felt that I could earn enough to live on. I never had a high, *costly* life-style, [laughter] so that I didn't need loads and loads of money to do the kinds of things I like to do. I had a nice house and my husband *was* continuing to help me. Even through the 1979 session, as I recall, I was still getting the thousand dollars a month, because the legislative pay is not enough to live on—particularly if you're maintaining a residence in Carson City and one in Las Vegas at the same time, as all Clark County legislators have to do. So throughout

the session, I was thinking about going to work for money in between sessions.

*You made an interesting comment to me when we were not on the tape, that you felt like you owed it to your ex-husband to go to work.*

Well, it wasn't that I *owed* it to him so much as that I owed it to myself, I think. That I was perfectly capable of working for money, and now I could. Now was the time to go *do* it. He had supported me through my getting my master's. He was very supportive of my running for the Senate and continuing the alimony during that time. I got elected and now I'm in Carson for the session; he continued to support me through that.

I felt it was time to take action on this career planning I'd done back in 1978. Some of the options I had discarded, and then I ended up running for office, which then took all my time to run and win, and then serve for six months full-time in the session. So now I'm at a point where I can say, "OK, I have eighteen months here before the next session that's mine, minus a few days for the Futures Commission and other kinds of political work."

I started exploring this idea of working for the Clark County Library, which had become quite a large professional organization by that time—a special district in Clark County. As I mentioned earlier, the position of Community Relations Director became open because Lamar Marchese moved on to wanting to run the public radio station full-time. I had remained *always* connected with the library happenings, one way or another.

The library is run by a Board of Trustees, and I never served on that board, because *way* back when they first started creating that board, I had moved on to the leadership in the League of Women Voters. I really felt

I couldn't do both. There were great people who did serve on the Board like Lou Schiller, who had been active in the initial petition campaign, and Earl Monsey. I was always there supporting the library one way or another, and now I had the opportunity to go to work there.

It's interesting that the reason they could hire me is that I now had a piece of paper that said I have a master's degree; and actually, the job *was* related to public administration. So having lost the election [laughter] and taken the time to get that master's degree just helped. I don't know what kind of work I could have gotten had I not had that master's. It would have been *really* tough, because even a place like the library that clearly wanted me for my skills and my background and my passion for libraries and all of that, their professional standards said that they couldn't even interview somebody that didn't have a master's degree of *some* kind. I wouldn't even have made the cut, had I not had that master's. You know, I again look back at the silver lining of losing that election. I did have the master's, and I got the job.

Charles Hunsberger was the Director of the library and had been there for several years at that point. My office was in the main library, which was the Flamingo Library. I jumped in with both feet and *really* just loved it, because it was the kind of job that was just made for me. The work broke out into four or five different major categories. One was being in charge of putting out publications that the library might want to do: an annual report of activities in the library; the monthly calendar or bi-monthly calendar of events; other brochures, as we got into political issues relating to a bond issue; publicity. I had an assistant and my office did news releases on activities and feature articles. We handled the marquee out front as to what was happening,

public service announcements on radio and television, and got staff on talk shows. Public speaking was kind of a plus. And I was still a Senator, so I was living in both worlds now. I was in demand as a public speaker, both on libraries and just as a state Senator. That was OK to do that on the job.

Library community relations projects—I did a *tremendous* amount in that area. I developed a community information database necessary to communicate with the public—news media, public officials. I was creating that. Lamar had spent most of his time on things related to the radio station, which was started at first in the library, than on the more traditional P.R. kinds of things. So trying to establish real community relations was kind of a new venture. We created a speakers bureau. We had a booth at the JayCee Fair. We started offering monthly tours of the library to the general public to help them see *all* the aspects of the library that perhaps they weren't familiar with.

Question six was a bond issue on libraries that must have been on the 1980 ballot, maybe. I can't remember quite how that fit, but we mounted a whole community awareness campaign on this question. In doing that, we worked with the Nevada Humanities Committee. We got a grant through the League of Women Voters to sponsor public meetings at the library, meetings that would not take a stand but simply provide objective information to the people. So I was able to draw on all my past connections and experience to bring all that focus into making the library a more visible part of the community.

Then, we had a whole thing about library relations within the library world. We now had a legislative study committee that had been created at the 1979 session that I served on as the state Senator—so, clearly, I was

in what one could look at as a conflict of interest. I was being paid by the library, and I was a state Senator serving on a library committee—no different than a banker who was in the state Senate serving on an interim commerce committee, or a teacher serving on an education committee. But it was my first experience at being in that position of having this conflict, and that's the way the Nevada Legislature works, as a citizen Legislature.

*I noticed in one of the news articles that I read that you even addressed that publicly—how you would handle that conflict.*

Right. Right. I felt I had to be careful how I lived in both worlds and I tried to do that. During this time there was a White House Conference on Libraries. As a staff person and as a state Senator and as a library supporter, I was involved from many angles. I attended the conference as an observer from our library district and actually was a small group moderator at the White House conference. I presided over a plenary session of theme group representatives. I organized a post-conference in Nevada, and then created an archives of all the White House conference materials for the library reference department.

I attended the American Library Association National Convention in New York City. Actually, that particular summer (July of 1980) there was also the National Conference of State Legislatures, which was my other professional organization related to being in the Senate, and that meeting was also in New York City, back-to-back with the Library Association. I attended both of them with like the Fourth of July in between. That was my reunion with New York City. You recall my talking about the summer I spent there, where I just became a New Yorker for the summer. I had not been back since, hardly,

except for a couple of times with my husband when we lived in Washington. So the summer of 1980, I just wandered the streets of New York thinking about that summer of 1951. It was a different city then, [laughter] but still, some of the same landmarks were there. Well, *many* of them. I enjoyed that.

Going to the N.C.S.L. Conference—it was headquartered at the Waldorf Astoria. So here I am, really living it up. I recall I was there two days in between the two conferences to kind of hang out, and I ordered Waldorf salad to my room, thinking if you're at the Waldorf Astoria, why you *do* that, you know. [laughter] So it was fun.

On the Fourth of July, I went to the parade in downtown New York—down in the Wall Street area where City Hall is and Battery Park. By this time I knew people all over the country, including Carol Bellamy, who was the Vice Mayor of New York at that time. The mayor was out of town, and she was presiding over the reviewing stand for the parade, so I was right there beside her. We knew each other from Women in Politics and the Women's Conference back in 1977. So that was great fun.

Also on the reviewing stand that day was a man who was the Canadian Consul assigned to L.A. His name was James Nutt. He was a very political person, but *very* nice. His job was to be political; he was the Ambassador from Canada to the L.A. area, and I've forgotten what brought him to New York. We met, and we realized we were both from the West. In fact, he had met Governor O'Callaghan back when he was Governor and had done some work with him on some issues. I think the Governor had gone to Calgary to the Calgary Stampede, a big western special event that Nevada connected with, and we like to get Canadians to come down here. We exchanged phone numbers and addresses,



and that was the beginning of a friendship that lasted for about ten years. He and his wife, Grace, loved to travel and they loved to gamble. They loved to come to Las Vegas, and on one of his visits he arranged a dinner party at the Dunes that included O'Callaghan and me and a few other people. But that all started at the Fourth of July parade in New York City in 1980.

After the parade, I moved to another hotel up on Central Park South, which was the headquarters hotel for the Library Association. I stayed for another five days and went to all the things the library convention has and was part of a panel on the future of libraries. I was right in the middle of the Futures Commission work in Nevada, so I was *really* interested in connecting with people who thought about futures of libraries, and I gained just a lot of good information that I'd brought back to Nevada.

There was a *lot* of activity within the library world about professional growth and helping libraries move ahead. Then there was a lot of activity about the library as it related to government, and that was the Commission on the Future of Nevada. I instituted the distribution of citizens' surveys throughout all libraries in southern Nevada to gather just general information for the Futures Commission. I got the library world to develop a whole component of the Futures Commission Report on the importance of Information Services. So all the things we'd been doing—a statistical report and technical data. Computers were coming into being and were a big piece of all that.

*And that was another article that you handed to me with very good coverage of the future of libraries, so you were getting that information out.*

Right, and part of my job would be to write articles like that and get them in the proper magazines throughout the state, which I did. I connected with the state Department of Education, the Clark County School District, U.N.L.V. Continuing Education. I planned two workshops at the Governor's conference. I just connected us with all kinds of community organizations. I was also the staff person assigned to work with Friends of the Library which was a citizen group. I attended most of their board meetings, researched other activities of Friends around the country, acted as advisor to them and provided staff support for special events that they did, so that took time.

There were a whole bunch of things in-house. The library at that point had about nine branches, and I visited all branches to become familiar with their services. I was the only community relations person for the whole district. At each branch, some of them would establish liaisons that worked with me and fed me information that I could then get out to the general public. We developed a new logo for the library and just did a lot of things that you do when you're in that kind of work. I *loved* it. Of course, I was doing it with something that I loved, which were public libraries.

One of the things that we did that worked out really well was something called the Business Council. I've got a brochure. The Clark County Library jointly sponsored, with the Business Council Institute, two adult education type of workshops. One was held at the Chamber of Commerce, and the other was held both at the Chamber and at the library. I made a really big push to connect the library with the business world, because it was just good public relations to do that. We needed the business community to feel like libraries were important to them—that they could use them as tools to help them do their

business, through the reference departments and computer on-line material, as well as politically be willing to support more tax money for libraries—just support the kinds of things we needed.

*Not to interrupt your train of thought, but you mentioned computers a couple of times, and this was really the beginning of computers and the information age?*

It was. The first time I ever had my hands on a computer was right after I went to work at the library that summer. The library had a booth at the JayCee Fair, which was just a big community trade fair kind of thing, and we demonstrated our computer that had our card catalog on it. We all had just learned how to use that—how to push the right buttons to show that you could look up a book on the computer and see if we had it in the library—and we demonstrated that. We just had a few computers that could do that. At the Library District, this was tied to a mainframe computer that took up a whole room, about ten by fifteen feet. It had to be temperature controlled, and I mean, this was like *Star Wars*. It all was this *huge* mainframe computer, and then everything else we did tied to that. But this was the beginning of the computer age for the library system. It was bringing up its catalog on-line and ordering and getting into the whole automation, which was really something.

*And so, you've really watched that whole thing develop to the point where we have the Internet and the Worldwide Web and so many things on computer.*

Right. Right. Oh, wow! [laughter] Exactly. That was part of what we tried to show the business community, too, that we could be of real value to them.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce had put out, for years, a *really* good workshop curriculum for getting involved in politics—from day one to running for office or supporting candidates, et cetera—just the role of business. It aimed primarily for the business community. I got that and looked at it, and it was a very good basic thing, and so I worked with the Chamber. Remember, I had lobbied with them back in 1977 when I lost the election and had pretty good working relationships with some of the people on the Chamber board.

We developed “Nevada Politics and Government—What Role Should Business Play?” which was a workshop for the general public aimed particularly at the business people. It was held three different Tuesdays for two and a half hours, and we charged. I was the *key* instructor, but I brought in a lot of resource people—lobbyists and public officials.

The other workshop was “The Library—Learn How It Can Help Your Business.” It was both at the Chamber and the library where we could demonstrate the computer access and things like that. We talked a lot about inter-library loans, speakers bureau, tours and reference materials. Both of those were initiated by me with the business community, the Chamber, and were very successful.

*Was this fairly new, at that point, to try to make a connection between businesses and libraries?*

Yes, and the main thing that I know I brought (the timing was really good) was a focus on making the people aware of the library as a unique but very basic government service. I developed and did workshops for the library world. In 1980 at the State Library Convention I did a workshop, because by then this Interim Legislative Committee was

going to come out with recommendations for legislation and more funding for different aspects of the state library. We were looking at academic libraries, special libraries. I led a Lobbying Strategic Planning workshop at that convention of the state library, and that was August of 1980, so this would have been a month after I went to New York and went to the national convention.

Now we were planning to gear up to be successful in the 1981 session on a lot of things related to libraries. It seemed to me—and I shared this with both the library staff and the public, and they built on this, and it turned out to be very successful—that we *had* to establish the fact that the library's mission was very much like police and fire. They had to have a percentage of taxes invested in keeping the library in a state of readiness to be used by each individual when needed. The reality was that libraries were like parks, in that they were the *first* to be cut whenever you felt like you were in hard times. Too many people thought, "Well, the library's a luxury. You really don't have to have a library." We were establishing the fact that you *did* have to have a library—that it was an *absolute basic* community service and as important as police or fire, and that it had to be in a state of readiness, because individuals never quite knew when and where they were going to need the library.

We were showing them how so many aspects of their lives could be enhanced by getting to know their public library—that it was kind of a piece of their "lifeline." We re-established an old idea that everybody (this is not *our* idea) needs a support system to function—your family, your best friends, your business associates, whatever. We established that the library should be a part of that support system—that it was *every* bit as important as a lot of these other things.

And that the way you used the library would change as your life changed.

The really unique thing about the library was that each individual could use it on his or her own terms. How *fabulous*. There are no eligibility criteria. You can just walk in and make use of it. You write your own agenda, and you work at your own pace, and there's a staff available most of the time to help you find the right materials. There aren't any right answers. No one's judging you and saying, "Oh, you're not looking at the right material here." That's up to you. What a luxury. What a great tool for every individual to have in their life. But people weren't aware of that. They take their kids to find books for a book report, or they go look at the help wanted ads when they needed it, or they'd go look at a book review, but all of these other aspects of the library, people weren't aware of. So we created a whole public relations campaign to show people how important libraries were to their lives.

Then, they should be willing to support them politically with more of their tax money. Subsequently, there were just incredibly big bond issues passed in Clark County. Now, I don't take all the credit for that, but the seeds for planting the importance of libraries in people's lives really were sprouted [laughter] in a big way during this 1979-1980 and on through the eighties time frame. Just *many*, many people—library staff, library Friends, politicians who jumped on the library bandwagon—all worked together to make it happen. So, it was a real exciting time to be involved with the library world.

*And it sounds like it was an effective campaign, too.*

It was. Charles Hunsberger was a very good administrator. Well, I just can't say

enough good things about that. He was *very* supportive of all my ideas. I had more ideas than what was good for us, at that point in time. [laughter] I think the staff *groaned* when they saw me coming, because I was really able here, for the first time, to take something and focus on it and apply all my energies and skills to that and get paid for it. I mean, wow! Wow. That was fabulous. He was very supportive of women and was not afraid to hire women in key positions on his staff. There was really a good team of people at the Clark County Library during those days, so it was a joy to work there.

*Did you build relationships that have lasted beyond from those working years?*

Oh, *absolutely*. Absolutely. Nancy Hudson came as his Assistant Administrator and was then in charge of that computer room and maintaining our technical knowledge and, as the state of the art moved, moving us to whatever was appropriate at that point in time. I think she did a lot of other personnel kinds of things. She was excellent. And Ann Langevin, who had another name at that point in time (Ann Thompson), was in charge of all the outlying little extension libraries in places like Searchlight, Blue Diamond, and Mt. Charleston. She was kind of the “missionary on horseback” in charge of making sure library services got to all those little areas.

Nancy Cummings was there when I first came. I believe she was the administrator of the Flamingo Library. (Charles was over the whole district.) She left to go to Yuma, Arizona. She has now come back to be the administrator of the Washoe County District Library, and it's been really fun to see her come back to Nevada. A *lot* of other really great people—the Friends of the Library had a great community of people who were involved, so it was good.

I left the library eighteen months later, and we talked about that last time—the importance of why I did that. I've just illustrated that even more as I've talked. I've realized I'd forgotten about all the legislation we were working on and the Interim Legislative Committee. There was going to be lots of library legislation in 1981 of some kind, and I felt really uncomfortable in that conflict of interest position. Since I had already had these ideas about starting my own business, we moved on into that arena, and I resigned from the library right before I went to Carson City for the legislative session.

*And was that the main reason then that you resigned, the conflict of interest? Because this is a job that you thoroughly loved.*

Yes. I really loved what I was doing, and I'm sure I could have stayed there for a long time, but I still had these other ideas about other things would be fun to do. And I had connected with other women who thought it would be fun to do that, too. So we started having little strategy sessions on the idea of creating our own business. That was appealing, too. It wasn't *just* the conflict of interest. It was the appeal of some other prospect. I was being drawn in another direction at the same time.

So I left the library. I went to Carson City, and for the 1981 session, we've talked about abortion and the test site and the metro police bill.

There were some other *women's* issues that were still perking along, one by one. E.R.A. was basically dead. Sexual harassment became much more of an issue to be dealt with during that session, and some kind of state legislation was passed, I think. Comparable pay for comparable work was another issue—the idea that you could compare the importance of a

nurse to a policeman, or something like that. There were scientific studies going on around the country trying to match up comparable work for men and women, in terms of skills and education, and then comparing what one got paid for those comparable kinds of jobs. The pay scales for the women were really *much* lower for the most part. The state of Washington kind of led the way by passing a comparable pay bill, and I think they started first with government—said it had to examine that and make the salaries comparable. You did that either by lowering the men's salaries, which wouldn't be real popular, or basically by raising the women's salaries, which was *very* expensive because they were way below. Ultimately, Washington state government got into a peck of trouble, and I think there were law suits filed, and it became real messy and very hard to do.

There was a wave of time in Nevada where it was a big issue. A woman named Betty Jensen took up the cause here in Reno and created a Comparable Worth Task Force to see that women were going to get this, and she was very active on the Reno Commission on the Status of Women. There was a *lot* of talk about that and some efforts made, but it just was not an idea that ever flew, partially because of the cost. It was just so expensive to bring equity to women, so it didn't get done. But I supported efforts to work in that direction.

During this time Bob Brown was still running the *Valley Times*. Now as I look back, that one editorial that I've mentioned that just hurt to the quick, I think it was early in this session. Well, there was another editorial that he did in a different tone, and I think it had a 1981 dateline, in which he did some talking about the role of women in the state. Someone else in the state had come up with the ten most powerful men or ten most powerful

Nevadans. And I can't remember who did that—maybe the Press Corps or something. And there were no women in the list.

So Bob Brown came up with an editorial on the ten most powerful women. He was always looking for ways to grab attention for the *Valley Times*, and this would be a good way to do that. Well, I was in the list. In fact, I was number one on that particular list. (From the 1981 *Valley Times* editorial, Nevada's ten most powerful women: Jean Ford, Barbara Bennett, Thalia Dondero, Judith Eaton, Maya Miller, Ruby Duncan, Sue Wagner, Karen Hayes, Renée Diamond, and Mary Gojack.)

*So, this was a big change from the editorial that slammed you?*

Well, it was. That's right. In reality, I think it was his effort to sell newspapers. [laughter] But there was a lot going on, and these ten women that he listed were, in fact, making waves around the state in all kinds of different arenas. He was *always* supportive of women moving up. It was a genuine article in supporting the role of women in the state and feeling that they deserved their due, and that they might not show up in the list of ten most powerful Nevadans, but don't forget that these women are here, and they're doing what they're doing.

The other things that I was involved in, still as a state Senator, were these committees of the National Conference of State Legislatures. One was the Ethics, Elections and Reapportionment Committee, which met quarterly in some capital around the country, and we examined issues relating to those topics. I ended up being on a subcommittee on ethics, and I wrote a chapter on legislative ethics for a book that was published by the Hastings Center on Ethics back in New York. I visited there several times and met



with academicians and elected officials from Congress and state Legislatures. That was a very great experience, to get with these people and to spend time cogitating on ethics and public officials. I enjoyed that a lot.

I also had helped create the National Elected Women's Network earlier and continued in a leadership role in that. One of the connections that I had made through that was The Center for American Women in Politics. And Ruth Mandel was really a mentor of mine in that whole world. She was writing a book in the late seventies, which came out in 1981, called *In The Running*. It was published by Ticknor & Fields out of New Haven and New York. A *lot* of the book identified just dozens of women, anecdotes of real live women in politics doing their thing, of which I was one. There are probably ten or twelve references in the book to me and my campaigns, and my evolution as a woman in politics. Some of them were the kinds of things we've already talked about: like the Men's Advisory Committee; some unique aspects of campaigning; and my attitude toward the role of money and that type of thing. The book was quite popular and used by people all over the country, I'm sure, as a good tool for looking at techniques on women getting involved in politics.

Another book that was a *big* influence on me earlier, and one that I used always in workshops that I did, was one called *Political Woman* written by Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, who went on to be appointed as a U.S. Representative at the United Nations. At the time she wrote this she was a professor of political science at Georgetown and Vice Chair of the Democratic Central Committee's Commission on Vice Presidential Selections. I cannot remember the position at the United Nations she held, but she was a high appointee.

Well, this book by Kirkpatrick was published in 1974 by the Center for American Women in Politics, and it was just a gold mine. It had chapters on "Deciding to Run," "The Campaign," "Women in a Man's World," "Legislative Prospectives and Roles," "What is the Future of Women in Politics?" And it, too, was highly documented—had a *lot* of references to the earlier wave of women who had started in before the seventies. It was just a bible to me. I used it often, and then later took out of it things that I used in speeches throughout women's groups in Nevada and things that Mary Gojack and Sue Wagner and I would use when we'd do workshops around the state. Kirkpatrick's book was an early tool, and then later Ruth Mandel's book built on that and, of course, had us in it, so that was exciting.

I remember Ruth Mandel interviewed me several times, *one* of which probably was during the 1979 session. It takes years to get these books from the interview stage to being published, so it was probably the 1979 session. I remember talking with her from a phone booth in the Senate. I mean, I was in the Senate during the session, and she was one of my phone calls I needed to return. Of course, you always have to figure out how to connect with somebody on the east coast with the three-hour difference. I remember a really *long* interview on that phone, which was in preparation for things she wanted to put in this book, and it was fun to later read. She interviewed me several times, and I think this was a follow-up interview. We had worked together on a National Women's Legislative Conference, as well, so we'd been together in her offices and things. I think this was a follow-up on a lot of the points that I had talked about.

*So you were kind of jamming that interview into a very busy day?*

That's right. [laughter] So, that was fun.

Another piece of my life that was going on during the running for the Senate and then serving in the Senate for those two terms was a relationship that I had with a man named Harold Robertson (Robbie). That first year after my divorce, it was graduate work and I had my nose buried for the most part in a study carrel at the university. But I think it was about January of 1978 . . . I can't remember how and where we connected, but we had known each other at some distance because of our positions in the community. He was the managing partner of Deloitte, Haskins, and Sells, one of the big eight accounting firms, and his office was in the Valley Bank building downtown. We connected socially in some way that led to his asking me to dinner and our finding that we both loved to dance, and that we did it really *well* together.

For the next year and a half, I think, we became a couple—not exclusively—but it really was a case of where we were good for each other, both politically and personally. His wife had died within a couple of years prior to that, and I certainly wasn't the only person that *he* was seeing. But he had social obligations at which it was good to have a woman with him. That's going back to this whole thing of men and women, together as couple, as partners, et cetera. I was kind of coming up for air from classes and studying, and I loved to dance. All of a sudden, I was being wined and dined by somebody who had the money to do it in high style, and we could go to social events together and enjoy each other and see and be seen. It was just a good match at that point in time.

He became a pretty steady escort of mine throughout the political campaign. When I was elected, he came to Carson City for opening day and then for some of the major

social occasions that would go on during the session. He was up quite frequently.

His own circle was the business community of Las Vegas . . . well, more than that—the whole state. He had mentored at least twelve young men that I met during that time, who started with Deloitte, Haskins, and Sells in some way and went on to be major owners, stockholders and managers of places like Circus Circus, and all the big hotels. He was there on the ground floor of developing really sophisticated accounting systems for gaming, and he was highly respected in that arena, as was his firm. They had accounts with many of the big hotels at a time when they were just beginning to realize they had no choice but to get very good at that, because there was now a gaming regulation that required a business-like approach to this, so his firm was very much in demand. These young men—and it was *mainly* men (I think it was yet to happen that women would break through in this organization)—would eventually leave the firm and go to these casinos. Within five years, *all* of these young men were out there in positions of power of their own. So it was an interesting time.

I was his hostess for his office parties that he had, and he was my escort to the campaign functions.

*Sounds like you were in quite a social whirl, at that time.*

We were and it was fun, and I enjoyed being with him a lot. We both, I think, *considered* getting serious in this relationship. [laughter] But he eventually was transferred to Austin, Texas, and by the time he did leave, we both realized that it was not meant to be, in terms of a long-term relationship.

*Why was that?*

Politically and philosophically, we were *miles* apart. I mean, he was very conservative—had a very conservative background. He put up with my views on things, for whatever reasons, but we agreed not to talk about a whole bunch of things. It was *really* clear also that his feeling about a male-female relationship was that the man was *always* the one in charge and that if we were to consider a long-term relationship, *my* life would have to give. I mean, I would become his wife and all that would have to take high priority. I wasn't there. I mean, I knew I wasn't there. I was *never* going to go back to being somebody's wife without some kind of equity arrangement built in, and that was never going to happen with him. So it was fun. It came at a good time, I think, for both of us, but it ended. [laughter]

During that period was a time of going out with other men—not a *whole* lot, but to some degree. A philosophy professor at the university, who was from India, named Bhagwan Singh—we met and went out several times, and he escorted me to a couple of things. I was fascinated by him and his life. And there were a few others, but I was *really* busy [laughter] at all these other things that we talk about. I truly was not looking for a man, certainly not to be the central part of my life. I was not looking for a man to marry and go back to being somebody's wife and all of that. I enjoyed the companionship. I loved dancing, and I loved some of the social whirl, but that was not a high priority. When I would revisit my career planning—you know, what do I want for me?—finding a serious male relationship was *way* down the line on my list.

The idea that there would be men that would want to do things with me and I with them, I have done that. There have been a couple of men that I've really enjoyed hiking with, and we have done a *lot* of hiking together and then gone out for dinner somewhere and

all that. One here in Reno is Fred Peterson, who's a retired professor from the university. We connected when I (this is now more of my current life) got involved in the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship here in Reno. We had known each other casually, and then he was at the Fellowship. He had been divorced, had two marriages actually, and was living alone here in Reno. He had just retired from the university and was exploring what he was going to do with his time. We found we had a mutual interest in hiking, so for a couple of years we just did a *lot* of hiking together all over the Tahoe Basin, and we enjoyed that a lot.

Finding a man has never been a really high priority of mine, but I have enjoyed the companionship of men. On the other hand, there have just been an *incredible* number of men that I have made really good friendships with that were never even headed toward any kind of, you know, intimate relationship—men with whom I had common cause related to areas of interest. It was really, really fun to connect with them and realize that you could have a *friendship* with someone and share a lot of things, and yet it wasn't going to go on to any kind of sexual relationship.<sup>5</sup>



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NEW ROLE: ENTREPRENEUR

The *real* thing that interested me was the idea of creating my own business, maybe being my own boss and doing a variety of things. I was kind of exploring that, and I met some other women that were in the same boat, who were kind of there doing the same thing. By the late fall of 1980, five of us decided to create a company called Jean Ford Associates.

I resigned from the library as of December 1980. One of the reasons I did that was that I knew I was going to Carson City for the 1981 legislative session. They would have given me a leave of absence, and I would have had my job when I came back, but I wanted to be free to be myself as an individual in that 1981 session. I just felt uncomfortable that I would have a conflict with library legislation, because I now got my paycheck there.

It would have been much better to have waited until the summer to create this company. In retrospect, we might have had a chance of it succeeding had I done that. Because here five of us get together, only *one* of whom's ever been in the business world, and in December of 1980 we created a corporation

called Jean Ford Associates. We each put in so much money—quite a bit of money—to underwrite this company. We rented offices in a professional business park, and the company started functioning as I left for Carson City. I would come home weekends and meet with the other four women: Mary Forrester, Kathie Rice, Beverly Funk, and Correna Phillips.

We started off with a line of products that were consulting and programming for spouses coming to town on conventions, as well as workshops and career planning; it was a whole lot of things, all of which were kind of *soft* services for people. About this time, the economics of the state changed considerably, and we went into a real dive, so many people couldn't afford to hire us to do that kind of work. It was a luxury to hire such services, and we were a brand new group that hadn't proved ourselves. That's another whole story, which we can come back to later.

But the fact is that I resigned my position *largely* because I really wanted to be a free person—an independent entrepreneur—as I went into the 1981 session. And then, one of



the early things that happened to me was an editorial written by Bob Brown, my so-called mentor of ten years earlier, who now wrote this just *nasty* editorial about how could I possibly get so involved in supporting library legislation when I had this conflict.

I had *quit* the job. I had resigned everything. Yet he made it look like I was just going to have all this personal gain for supporting libraries. I mean, give me a break! Again, that's the kind of thing that happens to you. You just shake your head and say, "Why am I doing this?" [laughter]

*Because those are the things that really hurt?*

*Really hurt.*

*When people that you have known and respected and worked with question your integrity?*

Well, yes, that hurts even more, but just to have anybody know the facts, and then twist the facts to their political gain just really, always hurts. That was another example of that. My work at the library was *extremely* positive.

Jean Ford Associates only lasted about a year, and it was a total failure financially. After we used up our first capital, the corporation then borrowed money to keep it going—\$75,000 from a local bank. We used that money to keep going and became a little more savvy on how to manage ourselves, but the timing was *really* bad, and we had to recognize our business venture wasn't going to succeed.

One of the things that really hurt was this Hank Greenspun campaign against me. All of a sudden, here I've created this company. I come home now to help run the company and deliver services to the business community

in southern Nevada, and Hank Greenspun is saying I'm no damn good. In fact, I'm a *danger* to the community. Well, who's going to hire my company, that has my name on the letterhead, when Hank Greenspun doesn't like me? That was *really* negative. He hurt me financially. He never knew that, but right when we were trying to make my business work, he hurt it really bad.

That was not the only factor I was finding and would continue to find, because I then was in the business world for five years. From December of 1980 until Dick Bryan called, and I accepted his appointment in August of 1985, I was trying to make it on my own in the business world. Part of that was Jean Ford Associates, which was the first effort and which we dissolved. We did *not* go into bankruptcy. We were very proud of the fact that we each paid off our portion of the bank loan, and we dissolved the company. Then I created the Jean Ford Company, which was a sole proprietorship. I moved back into my home; brought Mary Forrester with me, who was one of the five in Jean Ford Associates and had been my campaign manager in 1978, and she became my administrative assistant. We worked as a team for about four years doing a whole range of consulting and did very well at that.

In 1983, I added another venture, which was the tour company Maxine Peterson and I did, which we will come back to later. I was still a state Senator when I was starting out in the business world. So this was another whole world for me.

But what I found is, all the things that I built my businesses around—the skills I had developed as a volunteer in the world of politics and community affairs—for the most part the public did not want to pay me to deliver those kinds of skills. They were too used to getting them for nothing. I found that

I could not mix being a public figure—going out for speaking engagements, responding to people's requests for help—and trying to earn my own living at the same time with those same skills. It just didn't work, but I tried that for about four years.

So here we are at the end of the 1981 session, which in some ways was similar to 1979. I wrote my usual letter to the public, to my friends—and by now I had *thousands* on the mailing list. I talked about being in the general session in the Senate, the standing committees on which I served, the office that I now had. The first session we had no offices for anyone unless you were a committee Chair. By now I had a cubbyhole on the third floor that was all mine and was my headquarters for free time activities of returning phone calls and answering mail and preparing testimony. Most often I was there from six to eight a.m. That was the only time I had to do that kind of thing, and then my committee responsibilities took over.

The social calendar, which was *still* a very integral part of the session, I learned how to use that to my advantage. I talked about the issues that I got the most mail on from my constituents during that time. They were insurance, the uninsured motorist kind of things were going on and no-fault; landlord/tenant relations in mobile home parks was always a big issue in my district; reduction of taxes and government spending was a big issue; public employee rights and benefits; health care was becoming a bigger, bigger issue; children, child abuse, adoption, special education; helmet requirement for motorcyclists; government support of the arts was emerging as an issue; gun control was always a big issue. These were things you *had* to take positions on. Library needs I made a big issue, because that was never a big issue to start with; prisons and alternatives

to incarceration; the needs and the rights of handicapped and elderly; and the creation of a new county in northern Nevada. This was the first push to create a county up at Incline Village, and I was very much opposed to that and was part of killing that bill, because it was just not good government at that point in time.

[Around 1980 I made another little "Stop and Look at Myself" chart or list.] I was still trying to figure out how I was going to make a living and how I was going to prioritize, because I had far too many interests. How was I going to deal with that? I divided my life into three phases: "Marriage and family," "Political and Personal Growth," and then "The Women's Movement," which is kind of interesting that *that* was so important in my life at this point. Within those, I looked at people that were important in each of those phases. And then, "Satisfying Activities." (This is kind of looking back, because it includes a lot of things we've talked about) Then, what I saw my role being in each of those, and what were some of my *feelings*.

"Marriage and Family"—of course, I had Sam, my ex-husband; Janet and Carla, my two daughters; Clarice, my stepmother; my father, Clarence; and then, Prudence, my mother-in-law. That was the immediate family that we had. My mother-in-law and I had reconnected after this kind of stormy period of the divorce, after Sam and I talking about getting together again and then deciding not to, and my getting the divorce. She was kind of between a rock and a hard place during those days—just *very* sad about all that was going on, but there wasn't a role she could play in it particularly. Eventually, we did reconnect. I can't remember the incident, but she has talked about the time I called her and said, "Come over and have dinner with us," and that must have been with me and Jan,

and maybe Carla was home from college. What a breakthrough that was for her when I called and said, “Come over,” because she was really wanting to be a part of our life. My ex-husband’s wife that he had married did *not* want her to be a part of their life, so she was pretty lonely.

We reconnected and then continued to do *many* things together until she died. In fact, she moved to Carson City to be closer to her other son, Oscar, when Sam moved to the island of Molokai. I moved up very shortly after because of my position with Dick Bryan, so then we reconnected up here in a very close kind of way until she died. So that was family.

The “Satisfying Activities,” of course, were cooking, sewing, home decorating, family camping, travel to Tahiti and Australia, and church activities in San Antonio, and then, not so much when we came to Nevada. So this was actually looking back from the beginning.

Under “Role,” I just had the word “traditional.” That was the very traditional piece of my life. Under “Feelings,” I had three words: one was “comfortable;” another was “guilt;” and another was “wanting more.” I think that’s real significant. The guilt, I know, had to do with my relationship with my daughters and the time that I was not spending with them, and also guilt in feeling I was responsible for the divorce. That was kind of just establishing that as a reality at that point in my life. “Wanting more” would have been accompanying this marriage and family. That was not *enough* for me, clearly relating to Betty Friedan’s *Feminine Mystique* and my being very typical of that era of the white middle-class housewife that had the “problem with no name;” and I recognized that I had that—that I wanted more, more than the traditional role, *more* than what that gave.

Well, under “Political and Personal Growth,” I have a number of names. And the first one is Sam, my husband. Then in no particular order as I thought of them was Hal Smith and Joe Dini. I’ve mentioned both of them as legislators in the Assembly that were so supportive of Mary Gojack and me. Both of those are men that I feel I can really call close personal friends. Bob Brown, who had come in and out of my life in highs and lows, but certainly helped launch me in the world of politics; Maya Miller and Mary Gojack here in northern Nevada, who were consistent friends and companions and colleagues, and a whole range of things. Robbins Cahill was the County Manager of Clark County and then went on to be the Executive Director of the Nevada Resort Association. His wife was very active in the League, Margaret Cahill, and they became close personal friends. He *always* was very supportive of me and what I was doing, and I’m sure he interceded on my behalf with a lot of “good old boys” that weren’t that happy with a lot of things I was doing. He was a good middleman.

Zack Taylor, who was very much a “good old boy” at that point, President of Western Savings and Loan in Las Vegas and very powerful in the Chamber of Commerce, but who always liked me and supported me politically . . . and I’m *sure* took a lot of guff from others in the business community for that, but it didn’t bother him at all. We became really good friends. We would have lunch or dinner together often, and we both really cared about consolidation of governments and tried to figure out ways to get that on. He would also support some of the other issues I wanted that weren’t high priorities of his, but that’s part of the political world—helping your friends.

So, all of those people I looked at as really positives, and I really didn’t put down

negatives. I was much more looking at who had really helped me.

“Activities” were the League, state parks, the Legislature, the library, Red Rock—all of those we’ve talked about. Overcoming the speech problem I have as a major element that I had to deal with in order to *do* all of those activities. Under “Role,” I had “organizing and growing,” which says it all. And under “Feelings,” I had “rewarding, exciting, and frustrating,” which also says it all.

“The Women’s Movement.” The people that I looked at in that regard were Mary Gojack; Kate Butler, whom we’ve talked about, who started out with League and then Nevadans for E.R.A.; Cynthia Cunningham, who was a southern Nevada woman active in A.A.U.W. and on the state Board of Education, was also very active in Nevadans for E.R.A. and was also one of the organizers in Nevada of the Women for Peace movement that the wife of the Governor of Arkansas started nationally. I never got involved in the peace movement. I supported it, but there just was no time. Sue Wagner, who had, of course, gotten elected in 1975 and then went on to stay in the Assembly until 1981 and then in the Senate and then Lieutenant Governor. We have been constant friends. Myrna Williams, who was a Democratic activist in southern Nevada, and then later ran for the Assembly—actually served in the Assembly, I think maybe when I was in the Senate. Myrna went on to be very active in the Assembly, then chose again to run for County Commission and is now on the Clark County Commission. Renée Diamond was also active in Democratic politics, had moved from L.A. to Las Vegas in the seventies and helped create the Women’s Political Caucus and some other organizations. These were kind of my main colleagues in organizing women’s activities. They were all in the south except for Sue and Mary.

Those activities were E.R.A., the International Women’s Year Conference, and then Women in Politics seminars which we did all over the state. Of course, the “Role” was “leader, organizer, spokeswoman.” And the “Feelings” that I had about all that were an “unfolding, consciousness-raising understanding of myself,” throughout all of that. And then, I had the word “joy.” So it was really just a major growing. All these activities fed on each other.

We had great press. The press *loved* all of us in these things, because we made press. There was lots of visibility, and we all became role models. I mean, *all* those women that I mentioned became role models in their own arena and we fed on each other and did a lot of things.

*I am struck by the fact that the women’s movement is the only one [on your list] where the feeling [you expressed] was joy, even though I’m sure you had enjoyment in others.*

Right. I would say that I probably did this list about 1980, because the whole world of going to work for money was not represented at all. So I was being supported by my husband’s money. I moved from that then into the world of first working for the library and then feeling like I just *couldn’t* have that conflict during the 1981 session. In the meantime, several of us got together with this idea of opening our own business, and so I moved then into a world for about the next four to five years of earning my own living and testing the ways that I might do that successfully.

There were actually six women in Jean Ford Associates to start with (one dropped out fairly early)—myself, Mary Forrester, Beverly Funk, Kathie Rice, Correna Phillips and Barbara Agonia. Two of the women

were instructors at the community college. Kathie Rice had been working for Clark County Recreation as a Recreation Supervisor with the Parks Department. Mary Forrester had worked for me in political campaigns, but otherwise was a housewife and League activist. Correna had been in the business world as an accountant for a company, and then she and her husband had their *own* company for awhile. I don't remember how we all connected with her.

We all got together, and we all had these ideas that it would be fun to offer our services for hire as a group. In December of 1980, we created the Jean Ford Associates. We rented space in Quail Park, which was a very *upscale* office complex, and we each contributed an amount of money to the capitalization of the company—from five to fifteen or twenty thousand each—giving us various amounts of shares in the corporation, and we launched Jean Ford Associates. I've already described basically the kind of services that we offered, but one of the main elements here is that I went off to Carson City, so it was the *rest* of them offering these services. [laughter]

We had several things we started. One was a welcome wagon kind of service, where we sold businesses the idea of being in a packet that we got to new executive types coming into town. Kathie Rice was the lead person on that.

We did workshops. Our offices were large enough to be able to have workshops right there. Mary was the Office Manager, more or less. Our eyes were bigger than our heads. [laughter] I mean, we were *so* naïve, and we just had *all* these things we wanted to do, and we just loved doing them.

Only one person had any experience in the business world, and that was Correna. We started paying ourselves a salary right off the bat out of this money, so the money

started going down *very* rapidly, because it takes awhile to let people know you're there. We hired a professional to do a logo—really fancy. I mean, we just did all this right, except that we didn't have enough business to pay for it. I would come home on weekends from the 1981 session, and we'd spend all weekend talking about what had happened that week, and what could happen next week and could we get more leads and just all that stuff.

And then when I got home in the summer, we had a *big* open house, and *lots* of people came, and we had accounts. I threw myself into that, you know, but I also had Interim Committees and all these other political things going on like the Ethics Committee of N.C.S.L. I was planning to be a state Senator for a *long* time, because I was now back in that role I loved, and I knew I did a good job of it for the most part. But now I needed to really become financially independent, and this business was a big venture.

I could see problems from the very beginning. We were not *jelling* as a group. We did *not* get along as a group. Well, it went from bad to worse. [laughter] I had a vision that was different from some of the others and the company had my name. [laughter] I was *technically* the leader, but basically, they didn't all want that kind of leadership, and we just had different ideas about how we should be functioning. And we didn't get the volume of business, so we were frustrated in that regard.

Some things we did were well done, but we came to a point where we had to decide what to do. As a corporation, we did borrow more money, which lasted another six months or something like that. Barbara Agonia had gotten out before we ever got started. She was in on the initial discussions, but she never contributed money to the first round, so we were back to the five of us.



Then we came to a point, which would have been about the first of the year in 1982, when we really realized it wasn't going to work. A lot had to do with the economy. Our kinds of services were *not* high priority for people. Training and consulting and serving conventions and all that kind of thing was down in the economy. And then, I had these political problems when Hank Greenspun hadn't done me any favors.

And for all of us, it was the same thing—except the woman who'd been an accountant—that we had all come out of the non-profit world and people weren't used to buying our skills.

*And likewise, did you—coming out of a non-profit world—did you have things to learn about the business world, too? Because it's very different.*

Oh, *everything* to learn. I knew *nothing*. We had books, and we had guides, and women in business was a big deal coming up. Women getting their own business was an emerging, very popular thing, but we just were not a good group. And we didn't have enough smarts to know how to be successful at what we wanted to do in the climate in which we were working at that point in time. So we made a decision to dissolve the corporation.

*Yes. And you said you felt good about that, that dissolving was actually a good option?*

Oh, well! As opposed to going into bankruptcy, which would have been kind of a black mark. [laughter] Lots of people do it and don't worry about it at all, but it would have really bothered us to go into bankruptcy with the idea that we were *not* going to try to reorganize and make it work, because it wasn't working.

And so we agreed to dissolve, and it was pretty uncomfortable. We had some difficult times in the relationships among ourselves. You know, it's hard to admit defeat. Different people did different things. Bev went back to working at the Community College. Kathie Rice may have gone back to county government. Correna had other sources of independent work that she could do. And Mary Forrester and I went back to my house. We still had a *lot* of difficult times closing down Jean Ford Associates. We had to liquidate furniture that we had purchased or leased; I can't remember which. We had a lot of business details we had to deal with to dissolve the corporation.

I started the Jean Ford Company, which was the same kind of business, but it was just the two of us and the overhead was gone. [laughter]

*So you were providing the same services, but you were no longer in a corporation?*

Right. In fact, through an agreement we took on some of the business accounts that were still under contract. We started the Jean Ford Company with *some* business, and then dropped a lot of other things that had been going on. I was the sole proprietor, and I hired Mary to work for me. We used the family room in my house, where I had set up a desk. It was an ideal place, and we set up another work station for Mary. I continued to do that for about three years and built it up to where I was able to really make a living in that manner.

I had a number of accounts. Several were with non-profit organizations. One in particular was the Nevada Association for the Handicapped. A man named Vince Triggs had become the Executive Director of this group, and they met originally, I think, over

in Lorenzi Park. It was, as the title sounds, a support system for the handicapped, to advocate things they needed to be more self-sufficient. Vince was an *incredibly* energetic organizer with a real passion for what he was doing. I can't remember how we first met, but he could see the value of hiring me as a consultant to work with that organization. I think for at least two years I was on a retainer for a monthly fee and did a variety of things similar to what I had done with the library. I became a community relations consultant for that organization. I helped them get a logo, get a presence in the community. I did training for his board. I helped them develop a long-range plan. He was very energetic in fundraising and getting community support, so we made a good team, and I know that I was of good value to that organization. So that was one account I had.

Another account I had during that time was the Clark County Library. I went back, and Charles Hunsberger was very open to a retainer for me to handle a whole range of things to keep him in touch with what was happening with some federal legislation that affected libraries. So in that way I was kind of a research consultant for him on legislation that affected libraries.

The jobs bills. Oh, what was it called back then? [laughter] First C.E.T.A., then the Job Training Partnership Act. OK. The J.T.P.A. legislation had passed, and there was all this job training money. There was really a role for libraries, because a *lot* of libraries around the country were becoming job information centers. They had all these reference materials, and they even created job information rooms in their libraries. They offered classes on how to find jobs, how to market yourself, and how to do resumés—they had all these bibliographies on resumé writing. So there was money for libraries to get as grants to help

build library services in that arena. I was his connection on exploring that kind of thing to add to the services of the Clark County Library. I did a variety of things for him.

I had three or four groups like that, that I had a *little* bit of income each month. We still were handling conventions—spouse programming for conventions—and that is one of the things we had thought the Jean Ford Associates could do in a really big way. The problem is that you need to be working on that a year ahead. You need to get those accounts months ahead of when they happen.

We had gotten a really big convention account that was scheduled about the time we dissolved the company, so it was agreed that Mary and I could go ahead and take that account and manage it. It was OK with the convention as well. It was the National Tire Dealers and Retreaders Association. We had made a bid to do a major spouse program for four or five days, and so we did. We just put together an extraordinary program and hired just a lot of people to work for us to lead motor coach tours, day tours, and then style shows and just a full range of things. I *loved* doing that kind of thing.

I could *never* have done any of this without Mary Forrester. She was just an incredible support system—just a one-woman team. [laughter] She was *so* good at what she did and so loyal, which would be like that dream administrative assistant that just knows where to be and what to do when. So it was just fabulous.

*So this was really kind of the ideal way to function for you?*

Yes. Yes. This worked really well, and we got accounts, and we got business. Mary got some on her own, too, which she managed. We got some business surveys for a builder

that wanted to do some surveying in the community, and she ran that account. She did most of the things that related to putting things on the computer and turning them out. And then all of the coordinating, like when we'd have a convention—all the calling of the guides for motor coach tours or the hostesses for programs at hotels. We had a whole string of people who were our friends and others that would be on call to work as those guides.

Another major convention that we handled was the National Sweet Adelines Convention. Several of these were at the Hilton. It was then the Las Vegas Hilton.

*And Sweet Adelines were what?*

The women's barbershop quartet organization. This was an international convention, and there were *thousands* of them that came to town. We handled all of their extra-curricular activity, so we would have like twelve tours heading out in one day to Hoover Dam, or horseback riding up at Mt. Charleston or Valley of Fire. We had guides for all this on motor coaches. I mean, this was really a big account.

*I'm just flashing back to when you first moved to Las Vegas, and you and Sam took Mondays and drove all over the county. This is paying off right now. [laughter]*

Right. [laughter] Oh, absolutely! Absolutely. And so, this is where I really used all the background of family camping and exploring. I was very into showing the *other* side of Nevada which was the culture, the out-of-doors, the state parks, the arts and crafts, the libraries. That was unique, because nobody came to Las Vegas to see *that*. It was just a component they didn't know existed, so to introduce that to convention tours was

a real plus. People had a good time, and they learned something, and we made money. The problem is you have to have enough capital to underwrite your existence while you build a clientele, because these sales aren't going to come to fruition for six, eight, ten months.

*And plus, you have to have some cash outlay to set up all of these tours?*

Oh, yes. Well, you work that out with the company. Once you get the contract the association will give you advance money. You negotiate all that. But, yes, you don't get a lot of your pay until the whole thing is over.

*But there's a big lag time between the sale of the project and the actual payment?*

That's right. That's right, but we did quite a number of conventions that came to town and did them very successfully—always had excellent evaluations. We had this whole stream of people who loved to be on call and work for us and were great tour guides in particular instances.

The Sweet Adelines were particularly fun, because *everywhere* they went, they sang. We just remember they were on a motor coach heading out to Western Village at Mesquite to go horseback riding. I mean, they sang all the way out there and all the way back. So it was just an unusual group to work with.

I was still in the state Senate and it was time to gear up for the 1982 campaign. I'm now talking about the fall of 1981 and the spring of 1982. I had every intention to run for re-election. This would be about February as I started really examining the to-do list of gearing up to do that, and looking at the race and what it was going to take to raise money and be there, and then to be gone for

six months from the business. That was just Mary and me; but still, when *I'm* gone, a big chunk of it's gone. It didn't take very long for me to realize I couldn't do all that, so I really had to decide.

An option was to go try to find somebody who wanted to subsidize me as a politician, you know, [laughter] to find some way to work for somebody else who was going to pay me to be away for six months or give me a job when I came home so that I could run and be in the state Senate for a six-month session. The business could not survive without me. So it was either find another avenue, which meant somebody was going to have to underwrite me part of the time—either a company or a person—like find a *guy* who wanted to marry me on those kinds of terms. [laughter] That was never a serious consideration. Basically what I was *looking* for was, who could subsidize me? I even played around with the idea of getting twenty really close friends to give me X-amount of money to survive for the next year so that I could be a politician, [laughter] which wouldn't set real well in the world of this *ethical* politics that I was living in. So I didn't consider that very strongly for very long either. The reality was that I could not run. It just became *really* clear, real quick, that I had to stay home and earn a living.

*How did you feel about that?*

I felt terrible. [laughter]

*Because you loved this work.*

Right. Right. Again, here I *knew* that I was doing a good job. I knew that I was well-respected in what I was doing. I knew that I could win re-election *fairly* easily, although I'd have had to mount a serious campaign. But the other part of it just wasn't there—financial

stability. So in my mind I made the decision that I could not run.

The political stirring was going on. People were testing the waters, and the political columnists were mentioning so-and-so's thinking of running, and all that. Well, a really *major* thing that was going on is that Dick Bryan had announced for Governor. I don't know exactly when he did that, but I think not until after the first of the year. We had been in fairly close touch, because we always were compatible philosophically and politically, particularly after I became a Democrat.

There was a very important lunch that we had together, which was about a week after he had announced for Governor, and he was making the rounds now. (He was Attorney General at the time.) I called him and said, "Let's have lunch," because I wanted to share with him some material, some information, that I thought would help him be Governor. He was running against Bob List, who was the incumbent. We had lunch together, and I told him about my whole disillusionment with the Futures Commission, which I felt was a real *negative* for List. Here List had gotten this bill introduced and passed, and he'd gotten all this money spent with staff, and all these people had given a big chunk of their lives to be on this commission, and then it had just been ignored and nothing significant had come out of the 1981 session. I felt List was vulnerable on that score now. The Futures Commission doesn't *grab* you as a really hot political item, but I knew that Dick would agree with me, and if he wanted to use it, he could. I'd had personal experience on the commission and I knew that it had not been handled well. So I was really giving him kind of inside information to use in his campaign.

The other thing that I told him when we had lunch, after I discussed the Futures

Commission, was that I wasn't going to run. He was the first person that I think I told in the world of politics. I said it was just a matter of information for him. Well, then we continued on with a lot of conversation about the campaign. At some point, when I was telling him about the Futures Commission and some other things that I felt he could use as issues, he was taking some notes, and I said, "Give this to the person who's going to be doing your research and all that, and I'll be happy to talk with them later and add some meat to the bones of all this."

He said, "I don't *have* anybody to do that yet." [laughter]

So what came out of that is that I, who was not going to run as of that day when I told him, became a consultant to his campaign through the Jean Ford Company. Within a week, I was on the staff part-time, because I had some other accounts, so I couldn't do it full-time, and I didn't want to do it full-time.

Here I was a state Senator—*still*, for another eight months—and now I was working to help Dick Bryan become Governor and being paid for it. Well, I announced very quickly in there that I was not going to run, so this all was in sequence.

I didn't go to work for him until I had announced that I was not running myself. That created a real flurry of newspaper editorials and comments. It was really news, because no one could imagine that Jean Ford wasn't going to run for re-election. I really got incredible coverage, because people wanted to know why, and I told them, "I cannot afford to," like Frankie Sue now, but a different set of circumstances. [laughter] In my instance, I couldn't afford to serve.

*Frankie Sue couldn't afford to run her campaign because the necessary amount of money wasn't coming in.*

That's right. I knew that I would get the money to run. In this case it was different, in that I *knew* I could get the money to mount my campaign. At that point in time, I felt I could raise the money to run *any* race I wanted to run. I just had become a really *good* politician [laughter] and all that went with that in terms of money raising and strategizing and connecting with people. But I didn't have any way to live after the session was over.

*And there weren't any other political offices that might have provided you a full-time living that you looked at?*

Statewide, at one point, I did consider running for Lieutenant Governor (actually that year, in *my* mind), but Lieutenant Governor then paid like—I don't know—\$12,000 a year or something like that. You couldn't make a living being Lieutenant Governor. The others were things like County Commission; I didn't really seriously consider those at that point in time. Well, and the timing wasn't right. Those commission races are in the general election . . . or somehow it didn't work. I can't remember who was up in my district, but that was never a big consideration, and the only other races are statewide—like state Treasurer, Secretary of State—and I wasn't interested in any of those. Mounting a statewide campaign was another cup of tea, you know.

I was interviewed all over the state and made a big pitch for the whole issue of legislative pay being high enough that one could afford to serve and not have to give up, because you really couldn't afford to. It's a financial sacrifice to be elected to the state Legislature, no matter what. It's changed since to some degree. The pay has increased. It was \$60 a day for a hundred days, I believe. That



was the *maximum* you could get for salary. Now, we served 135 days one of those sessions and 121 the other, or something like that. So after the first hundred days, you weren't getting any pay. You always got enough per diem to cover your living costs. And then with apartment, traveling home every weekend, meals— you could live, but you couldn't do much about any family you had, or a home you owned back home or all of that.

*And with the Legislature meeting every other year, there was no income in the in-between months.*

There became a little bit. There became an amount for interim committees for meeting, and your travel was always covered for that, but you couldn't *live* on that. So you *had* to have another source of income when you served in office.

*And you said it's now more reasonable?*

Yes. I haven't followed the exact amount.

*Do you think any of that change was a result of this situation with you?*

Oh, no! No. Well, the accumulation of a lot of people. Another person who clearly did exactly what I did was Diana Glomb, who came out of the world of community activism and the women's movement, was elected to the state Senate in Washoe County, beat an incumbent, had a *tremendous* election, was appointed to the Senate Finance Committee in her first term—well, in her only term—in the state Senate, which was a real coup. Husband left her right after she was elected—decided that he didn't want to have anything to do with that aspect of her life. They had one or two children. By the time she came out

of the session—she had been a social worker of some kind—she had *real* trouble finding a job. She worked part-time for the School of Social Work at the university, eventually found work up at the Job Corps, but when it came time to run for the Senate four years later, could not do it. She was in *exactly* the same position I had been—trying to find a way to have enough income to serve. Raising the money to campaign was not the issue so much as maintaining yourself. And there have been some men in those same situations. I can't think of one right off the bat—a good male example—but any legislator pretty much has to be retired, or subsidized by savings or investments or a spouse, or on a pension plan, or subsidized by a company that is willing to take you back when the session's over.

*Yes. Those were the only ways to do it?*

Those were the *only* ways you can serve, or be independently wealthy. That's still a problem. But in the meantime, the actual amount of money one makes and the per diem has kept up with the cost of living, so it's a little bit better.

*So at this point you were a part of Dick Bryan's campaign, and the work was part of your business, too?.*

Right. Right, As a kind of an independent consultant to the campaign. For the next six months, that was very intense. In fact, I spent over half of my time working for that campaign. For the most part it was a very positive experience. We were *so* compatible politically and philosophically. One of the things I did for him, which I know that he appreciated, was that I answered all of those confounded questionnaires that candidates get from all of those special interest groups.

They were the same ones that I had had to answer myself, and I could second guess his answers *really* well. We would get a questionnaire from the Mobile Home Owners League, for instance, and I would do a draft of his answers and give it to him, and he *rarely* made many changes to it.

He went on television in a variety of ways. I think there were some debates with List, and I was one of the coaches on those debates, kind of in terms of how to handle issues. Remember when I first ran for office, and Bob Brown gave me this little list of questions I should answer which kind of set the tone for my whole campaign? Well, I gave those to the Bryan campaign. Dick had to answer the questions himself, and then we gave ten copies of that—slightly revised—to his friends and others in the campaign staff to answer, looking at Dick objectively. Out of that we built the list of strengths and the list of weaknesses, and what his campaign mission ought to be—his theme—and who was likely to support List instead of Bryan, and what were the issues that people cared the most about. We built all of that. I was *intimately* involved in building that for the 1982 campaign.

He hired a *very* sophisticated team of people from out of town to be the major campaign consultants, Matt Reese Associates. They were excellent, and they brought a wealth of ideas on how to campaign effectively—how to use a candidate's time. That staff would come in for blocks of time and meet with us. Incredible. I mean, they were *excellent*. A man named Ashford was the lead guy.

And then, there were other national pollsters that he hired, so here I was really moving in the high circles of a Governor's campaign and meeting all of these people. I was part of the kitchen cabinet, kind of the inner circle of friends and associates who were the basic strategy group for the campaign.

The one *major* contribution I made was that I truly did feel—and this fit with where Dick was coming from—that the state needed to take the leadership in tourism and economic development. The state had had a very meager department. Dick (now Senator Bryan) just recently spoke at an event where he recalled a \$40,000 budget, which was even less than Guam, for promoting tourism in Nevada at that point in time. The whole philosophy up to that point—and particularly with the List administration—was a nice conservative philosophy that the less government, the better. Tourism was being built, and it was growing through the Convention and Visitor Authorities from the room tax revenue that was being generated by hotels, and then that was being run by hotel owners and local government people from Clark and Washoe Counties and, to a lesser degree, in the other counties. The last thing they wanted was anybody at the *state* level telling them what to do, or how to spend their money, or competing with them. That was the reality at that point in time.

However, the economy had gone to pot, and for the first time gaming was affected in Nevada. Before it had seemed to be able to ride through national periods of low economy OK. But the 1980 to 1982 time, which was [laughter] when we were trying to make our business go, it was different. I don't know enough to be able to tell you why, but that was the reality, and that gave Dick Bryan a major piece of the platform on which to run. People were willing to listen to the idea that state government ought to be helping market Nevada—both to bring businesses to diversify the economy away from gaming (or in addition to gaming) and to build on the industrial warehousing and light industry that had been started in some parts of the state—and to do a *tremendous* amount of

stuff to market in the area of tourism, which we had never done at the state level.

He proposed a Department of Tourism and Economic Development that had real teeth—that had real budget. That was just a major new move for state government, and I wrote the position paper that he used in his campaign on that. I was much more attuned to the tourism side than I was the economic development side, but I wrote a pamphlet which was printed and distributed at a press conference and then used throughout the campaign called *Gaming and So Much More*. It really set out what I've just described—that the state of the economy depended on gaming and expanded tourism, and how we could expand tourism to include history, parks, culture!

*You had recently really gotten into the whole tourism business with your Jean Ford Company and your work for spouses at visiting conventions. Is this where your awareness of tourism and the need for government to get involved came from, or does it go back further than that?*

Well, I'd become aware before that. Actually in 1980 I had led the first of many tours I was going to lead throughout rural Nevada. That came about as a result of my connections with adult continuing education at the university in Las Vegas. I had taught those workshops earlier about *Women in Politics and Legislative Process*. Frances Saxton, who was the coordinator of non-credit workshops and the natural history tours, was a good friend. Somehow the idea emerged of leading this motor coach tour into rural Nevada. A lot of this came from my state parks involvement and then serving on Western Regional Commission of the Advisory Commission for the national parks.

My interest in the out-of-doors and all of that had been there forever.

Bill Fiero (Dr. William Fiero) had come to southern Nevada from the Desert Research Institute in Reno as a water specialist—a geologist—and was teaching down there and started leading natural history tours for continuing education. He had a *tremendous* following—took people to exotic places all over the world, as well as down the Colorado River and to Death Valley and a number of national parks in the Southwest. We became good friends and this idea emerged that together we would lead a trip through Nevada. He hadn't done much into rural Nevada. He'd done all these other more international things, but he knew the state very well. So we decided to lead this trip—a motor coach tour. It would be six days and five nights and would be probably for newcomers coming to Las Vegas who wanted to learn more about the state. He would do the geology, the natural history, and all of that end of things, and I would do people and politics. Together we would kind of organize the itinerary, and I would do the booking of the rooms. Well, actually, Frances Saxton helped us with a lot of that. We designed the tour, and she agreed to book it as part of continuing education's catalog.

That tour sold out. We had, I think, forty-five people on it. We did *not* draw newcomers as we had thought. The majority of the people on the tour were old-timers who wanted to take a nostalgia trip. We found a lot of people on it that we knew. My next-door neighbors across the street from me—Garland and Maizie Ronnow—went on the trip. The Ronnows were Mormons whose ancestors came to Nevada back in the earliest days, and he had been born in Panaca. Lincoln County was our first stop on the trip, and we actually ended up driving by the house in which he

was born. The trip involved a big circle of Lincoln County; then to White Pine County and staying in Ely; then on up to Elko, staying in Elko and visiting Lamoille Canyon; on over to Eureka; west to Austin in Lander County; down to Tonopah in Nye County and back home.

The people on the tour helped lead the tour, which has happened on every one of my trips that I've led since. That was the prototype; that was the first "Discovering the Other Nevada" tour, and it was incredibly successful. We all just had a fabulous time, and I became aware of how incredible [laughter] this kind of thing was. I thought there's *got* to be a way to do this for money. Two years later I worked into it, in terms of day trips with the convention programming for spouses, but we hadn't really done overnights. But the idea was still there that one could, and one could make money doing it.

Maxine Peterson was a good friend who lived right across the golf course and whose kids were the same age as my kids. She had been a colleague in the League of Women Voters, and we had *traveled* quite a bit, and even our families had traveled together some. Right at the same time (1982) that I decided I could not run and that I started to work on the Bryan campaign, and we had these accounts to do consulting and everything, Maxine and I decided to create a tour company and do these tours. We created a company called Nevada Discovery Tours. Here I am now [laughter] with the Jean Ford Company just kind of perking along as independent contractors, and Mary Forrester handling a lot of that, and then we started Nevada Discovery Tours.

*Did you start that before you started the campaign with Dick Bryan or about the same time?*

I think it was afterwards. I think it was later that same year after the election, but it was all a part of my mentality as I wrote this thing for Dick. That's kind of how all this ties together. *Gaming and So Much More* just spelled out this vision of taking people into rural Nevada, of helping their economy by building on museums, parks, rodeos, county fairs, the Basque Festival, and all of that. (I think the tour company did come afterwards that same year.) That thinking did become a major element of Dick's campaign, and he believed in it, and he built on it.

A very key thing happened on primary election day of that year. Well, I guess because I was moving in the convention-planning, spouse-programming circles, I was connected with all of the tourism type companies in Las Vegas. There was a major tourism conference coming to the convention center called, "Pow Wow," and it was put on by the Travel International Association. That was an international trade association. They went around the world having annually what they call "Pow Wow," which was where buyers and sellers meet. Travel agents and tour companies and tour brokers were the sellers. Well, another set of the tourism industry would be buyers, or the other way around—hotels, resorts, attractions, et cetera. Anyway, buyers and sellers in the tourism world. And this was one of the biggest conventions ever, and it was in Las Vegas on primary election day 1978.

I arranged for Dick Bryan to tour that convention, and I escorted him on that tour. He went around and visited with both buyers and sellers and began to learn more about the real big-business world of tourism and marketing, and where Nevada might fit into that. He has commented on that many times, because it was a big eye-opener to him, and it gave him something to talk about in his campaign.

I continued to be involved in the campaign through election day, and he did win. Everybody in the know in Nevada thought that I would immediately receive some kind of major appointment in state government. The rumor was that I was going to be everything from Director of Human Resources to Public Service Commission to whatever. In reality, I met with Dick in his Attorney General's office in Carson after he had won. Now he's putting together his cabinet and all those things one has to do as a Governor-elect. He, in fact, asked me if I had any personal interests. I said, "I want to be on the Tourism Commission. I want to help you get the Department of Tourism," which still had to be *created* by the Legislature, "and then I want to be on the Commission."

I did not want to leave Las Vegas. I really *loved* the kinds of work I was doing with the contracts I had, and we were starting the tour company, and I loved that potential of being out leading those tours into rural Nevada. Maxine and I worked very well together, and I just didn't want to leave it at that point in time. I could have had an appointment, I'm sure. There was no one appointment, set up there dangling in front of me, but I'm sure I could have gotten something really good had I wanted to move to Carson, but I did not. So for the next two years, I continued to build the Jean Ford Company and Nevada Discovery Tours and continued to work for Dick as a consultant in a small way through the 1983 legislative session.

As I had mentioned before, I felt really good about the role I played in helping flush out some of the issues that, to all of us on the campaign team, needed to be addressed—particularly the economic slump that the state was in. One answer to that was to diversify the economy, which became Dick Bryan's major campaign point of conversation. I found in

my files something called "Bryan's Economic Agenda for the Eighties" with a date of July 6, 1982 on it. This, as I recall, was the outline that I put together out of conversations that maybe several of us would have together. So I'm not saying all of this was just my thinking by any means.

I wish I could remember all the people that were involved in the campaign. Key people that were involved in various aspects of it were Sarah Besser; Lou Gammage in Las Vegas; and Keith Lee, who was from northern Nevada. Frank Schreck was extremely involved.

A man named Don Williams, who was a professional political consultant and had been around for years, was probably my *least* favorite. All these other people were really true to Dick Bryan—supporters of the first order—who had been with him for years in his political endeavors or were now with him in a very committed kind of way. Don Williams was one of these guys that offers to go to the highest bidder—where does he wish to position himself in this campaign? I honestly do not know his history. He was a *very* negative element in much of the campaign proceedings. However, he was very smart, and he knew the Nevada political scene. I never really discussed him with Dick Bryan and why he would choose to have Don Williams on his team. I would *probably* believe that it was because he didn't want him on anybody else's team working against him. He was the kind of guy that you just didn't want working against you, although it was hell to have him work *with* you. [laughter] And that is, I think, the situation that we were in. We didn't need him. He was a real problem. He didn't, by any means, have the whole picture in his grasp. He just kind of knew where bodies were buried, and he was good in the trenches, I guess, to talk about gut-level strategy. He had good



ideas, but it was really difficult whenever he was in a meeting to stay on an agenda, to move down a logical path, to get things done.

There were many others—of course, Bonnie Bryan, who was actively involved and a great asset for Dick and the campaign—was a jewel to work with. Some were more involved in the running of the headquarters in the big gala fundraiser-type events. I think Lou Gammage was *very* good at that kind of thing and still works with now Senator Bryan in working on special events in southern Nevada. Dorothy Huffey and her husband were very involved in the campaign. I can't remember whether they were living down south or up here at that point. I probably should look at some campaign material, because I'm going to leave people out. But I think those were some of the key people.

Well, the economic agenda for the eighties—basically, this is what we put together, out of which the Bryan campaign then did sound bites of various issues or issue papers around all of this. That's where I did the one called "Gaming and So Much More." [As I wrote it,] the goal was "a strong, viable economy for Nevada characterized by stability, diversity and carefully planned growth that enables the fulfillment of the needs and expectations of Nevada's present and future generations." How does that sound? This was 1982—fifteen years ago, and here we are in 1997 looking at the growth element as a *major* issue throughout the state, even last week in the headlines. So here we're looking at how to carefully plan that growth and have it be stable and diverse.

"Programs will result from an integrated economic development policy, which recognizes the interdependence of our current and future economic base upon..." And then, there were about five things that really all had to be looked at if the state was going to meet

this goal. Well, one was education, another was transportation, another was energy—the energy policy, and that had to do with the test site and utilities, just energy for our own companies to be able to function—and communities, human and natural resource management and equitable tax policies.

So this sounds like a comprehensive political campaign, right? But *all* those things are needed if you're going to have an integrated economic development policy. The major elements of the economic agenda started with an energetic, enthusiastic, competent Governor heading up the team, which Dick Bryan *was*. He was superb in this role as a campaigner, and he believed in it. That, I think, was a major element in his winning—that he had something he believed in. The timing was right. It was time for the state to take a more aggressive stance in helping the economy, something that Bob List as a conservative Republican had *not* done and didn't believe in as far as Republican philosophies went. It was the right place at the right time kind of thing, and we put together a good package for him to talk about.

He wasn't going to do this by himself. As Governor he would need the Lieutenant Governor working closely with him. The Secretary of State plays a major role with corporations. The state Treasurer handles the bond bank state investments. So that office needs to be informed and working together. The state Controller needs to be a part of the team regarding data processing, information management, and the Attorney General as a legal advisor. There you have your top elected officials in the state, and he's extending his arm to them saying, "We *must* all be on this team together to carry out this integrated plan." He was saying he wouldn't do this by himself, but he would expect to lead the team that included all these other major state

officials, some of whom would have been . . . Well, let's see. The year he ran, I guess they all would be running—general election, four-year terms. So these were all other political races going on at the same time.

*So you didn't know exactly who was going to be in these positions?*

Yes. Right, and some were more friendly with Dick Bryan than others. Everybody's having to stake out their own position on where they fit into all of this.

Then his major hook that he used to talk about all this was a Department of Tourism and Economic Development, which the state had never had. This would provide leadership and coordination, acting more as facilitator than provider toward diversification of the economy. We talked about seven different areas of the economy. One was industrial development, which was going along fairly well in Reno and Las Vegas with warehousing and that type of thing. So we knew that that could be an element, but it could be marketed more.

*And this was originally conceived of as one commission for both economic development and tourism?*

Not a commission—a department. One leg of the department would be tourism, travel and special events. Another leg of it would be small business development. Another would be international development and foreign trade. Another would be the motion picture and television production, which was underway in a significant way at that point in time, but had not been given staffing or marketing possibilities so it could develop in its potential. Economic planning and research—this would be an element of state

government that would feed all these others the information that they needed. And then, information services and promotion—that would be the marketing end. So five of these were hard-core types of economic work, and two of these were support services kind of thing.

We started working in July on getting Dick Bryan to think of himself as Governor and all the things he would need to be prepared to do once he got elected. The more Dick thinks about his answers the more his campaign will take on a substantive air. He will have ideas and plans to plug into the appropriate conversations, be on the lookout for talented people to get involved in his administration, full-time or advisory in nature. He will sound and act like a man who is capable of running the Nevada state government. He will also be laying groundwork for the transition that must begin, to some extent, on November 3.

*So one of the keys really was that concept of having him start thinking of himself as the Governor and being prepared that far ahead of time. Would you say that would have been one of the keys to help him win?*

Absolutely! Because he came across as someone who *wanted* to be Governor, who had progressive ideas at a time when the state needed help economically. Some people were always reluctant to look at state government getting bigger or having more power, but things were not working real well the other way at this point. So why not give this a try? At the same time, things were happening all across the country. Other states were getting *very* involved in economic development marketing and tourism marketing, et cetera. So it wasn't like this was a wild idea. In fact as he has pointed out, we spent less money than Guam on tourism at that point in

time. We were right at the bottom of the barrel. We couldn't compete, and other states were getting very good at competing for both tourism people and industry, and all the rest.

So anyway, he won, and I chose not to remain involved in a continuing kind of way. I really wanted to make the Jean Ford Company work, and I had this idea of the tour company. We incorporated it right about the time that Dick won the election. We had these ideas of the tours, some of which we had been leading as convention programming for spouses. The one-day tours into scenic areas and areas of interest in southern Nevada were kind of already happening. We knew that they were very popular. We knew there was a market, if we could reach people.

So now the idea of a tour company that would really market much more than that also began to take shape. Maxine Peterson and I talked about that. I really don't know why we chose to form it as a totally separate company, because I already had the Jean Ford Company going, which was myself as a sole proprietor with Mary Forrester working for me. But we did. I guess we felt we needed to make it a separate corporation, because we really looked at it being around for awhile. Maybe I would drop the Jean Ford Company, or it would do miscellaneous consulting, but the tour company would become the major business venture that we would spend our time on.

*And the Jean Ford Company had a variety of different services that you offered, while the tour company was a very specific service?*

Right. Right. It still had a wide variety of things within the motor coach tour-type industry. It was aimed at tour companies. The

whole idea there was to provide services in southern Nevada, northern Arizona, Death Valley and the Grand Canyon area for other tour companies around the country. We saw ourselves as a tour company's tour company—that when they came to Nevada, we would take over and plan and design and do all the management and the guiding of the tours while they were in Nevada.

*As a tour company's tour company, how would your clients have differed from somebody who just offered tours, for example?*

Well, we did both.

But those were ideas that I wanted to carry out, and that's why I didn't want to particularly go to work for state government. I was really happy with the results of the election, and I was really happy about the role I played in it. I enjoyed the people that I worked with, and it was a real positive experience. Plus, it paid the bills. I mean, I got *paid* for doing that.

There were some down moments, because I was not running myself. I wasn't going to be going back as a legislator and I missed that. But I had made that decision eight months earlier, so that was it. I just went on and said, "OK, now how do I succeed in business?" That was my goal.

What I did through at least part of the legislative session is continue to work for Dick Bryan as a consultant, mainly on now helping implement the economic agenda. Of course, the politics of it all hit the fan *real* early. *Huge* segments of the business community had been very strong supporters of Bob List—the more traditional Republican people who had a more conservative approach. And they were not on our bandwagon at that point. Here we'd won, [laughter] and now we needed them on our bandwagon. There were Democratic business people that had been involved, but

we now needed to pull everybody together, and that was a real challenge.

*How did you start doing that?*

Well, there were lots of small meetings. Of course, the appointments and all those other things that a new Governor has to think about are just overwhelming. But I worked on some ways to bring to the Legislature these ideas, because this is one area in which we had not done nearly enough work on during the campaign. For whatever reason, Dick Bryan did *not* have—when he won as Governor—a ready majority of legislators who said to him, “OK, Governor, let’s move forward.” They just weren’t there. There were some, but he had to start building legislators that he could count on, because the session comes really quickly, and he had to get them convinced.

*And that was your job as a consultant, to work on pulling people together?*

Well, I did some of that. I put together some briefings for him to do it. No, I wouldn’t say that I did that at all. I wasn’t the right person to do that; *he* needed to do it. And so we pulled together some briefings, and we got some business people to come who had been List supporters and to now say, “OK, we’ll move forward with the winner.” We got some Republican legislators to start talking about this.

Bob Cashell had been elected Lieutenant Governor, and he and Dick Bryan were not the best of friends at all. It became *real* obvious that Bob Cashell was going to be a major factor to deal with, because he would be over at the Legislature, day in, day out, while Dick Bryan was over in the Governor’s office doing a lot of other things in addition to dealing with the Legislature.

So Bob Cashell really set out to take Dick Bryan’s major agenda and carve it to his own wishes, and to a great degree he was successful at that. For instance, he was able to get on the idea that there would be a separate economic development department and a separate tourism department—to split the two, because Dick had a lot more support on the tourism side than he did on the economic development where these good old Republican boys were. Bob Cashell was there when the legislation got introduced, to talk to legislators all day long if he needed to, to get them to amend it the way he thought it ought to be. And so, it was a really big struggle to get these bills through in a form that we felt could be effective. Bob Cashell was basically, I feel, working pretty much against the Governor much of the time.

In the scheme of the legislation, the Lieutenant Governor is set up as the Chair of the two commissions. And that’s really an untenable arrangement—that the Governor is the Governor, but the Lieutenant Governor is the Chair of the Economic Development Commission and the Tourism Commission. The appointments are made by the Governor, but the Lieutenant Governor chairs the meeting at which they all vote on what’s going to happen—the policy end. The commission hires the Director in each case. [laughter] It’s *too* much checks and balances, so that *nobody* has the right kind of power to do the job. And that was all engineered pretty much by Bob Cashell. That is not the way we would have done it originally at all.

*How would you have done that?*

Well, it would have been much more straightforward. It wouldn’t have had the Lieutenant Governor quite in that role in that

manner. I don't think it was a fatal flaw to end up with one group dealing with economic development and another group dealing with tourism. At some point, they have to come together and coordinate, so that's the hard part. I don't know that they've done that as successfully as they could in this state. But anyway, there was a lot of pulling and tugging throughout the session.

I don't think that's unusual at all. I haven't done a study of relationships of Governors and Lieutenant Governors throughout the history of Nevada, but they don't have to be of the same political party, and quite often they are not, so you already have some built-in political constraints depending on how partisan things have gotten. So it's a very individual thing depending upon who's elected at any point in time. [laughter]

*And so, that tug of war between the two of them kind of went on and was played out in this legislation creating the tourism and economic development commissions?*

Well, it was. And I can't remember when Bob Cashell did, but another factor in here was that he switched parties somewhere along the way. I can't remember exactly when that was, but he became a Republican and he did it deliberately. (I should remember when, because that probably plays into all of this somehow.) But anyway, the point is that Dick Bryan did not have a legislative team solidly behind him when he went into the session like he should have. He had to build it constantly throughout the session on each of the issues, and that's really hard to do, particularly when you have someone like the Lieutenant Governor over in the legislative building all day long working his own agenda. So it's amazing, on one hand, that we got on as much as we did when you look at it from that angle.

I remember particularly the film industry promotion. We scheduled a big party in the house on Mountain Street, just down from the Governor's mansion that used to be owned and lived in by Governor Sadler. It was at that point owned by a man in Carson who was involved in servicing the Hollywood film industry. He had been very supportive of Dick Bryan's efforts to broaden the film industry's work in Nevada, and we *had* a very elaborate party in this house. He had some old historic props, and we invited legislators, lobbyists and others to come. We had displays and clips—maybe of movies that had been made in Nevada—and talked about how important it was that we exercise greater initiative in this area. I planned that event, for instance. That's one of the things I did then as the consultant.

We planned a similar event around industry and another one around tourism in general, and these were designed to get the legislators on the bandwagon of seeing the value of these new departments that would be in this new bill. So I worked on those kind of behind the scenes.

I don't quite remember who paid me. It may have been that the campaign continued to pay me, because to get money out of state government to do this would have been a political question. And there *were* questions raised at that session about what I was doing, because some people saw me as a threat. They still weren't convinced I wasn't going to be in state government somewhere. People who were my detractors, some of them, finally got through to the Governor, and Dick Bryan came to me one day and said, "Why do you have these enemies over in the Legislature? They aren't helping our cause." [laughter] There were people spreading rumors about my involvement with his administration who just wanted to cause trouble with his legislation. If that helped, why then they'd do



it. So I only did this for a short time, and then it just became too much trouble to make it work, politically. So I stopped.

*Because of these detractors?*

Some of it, and just because they didn't need me anymore. I mean, I was in Las Vegas and all this was going on in Carson. To fly me up and have me stay was costly. It is during that time, I think, that I spent my night in the Governor's mansion as the guest of Bonnie and Dick, when I was helping prepare some of these events to happen.

I was appointed then, by Dick Bryan to the first Tourism Commission, and we traveled around the state. Bill Thornton was also appointed, and the two of us were almost automatically against the other guys. I was the only woman. The makeup of the commission was, I think, five or seven, most of whom represented the casino industry and needed to, because the funding for all of this came out of the room tax. They added on an additional amount of room tax to go for the statewide program. In order to mollify the local convention authorities, for whom this was their protected sacred cow, then they had to have membership on the commission to oversee the expenditure of this money. Some of the other funding came from—strangely enough—something like an airport fuel tax or some crazy thing like that. Then the heads of the convention authorities in Washoe and Clark Counties were added to the commission.

There were a couple of seats that they looked at as being ones that could represent the little people. Well, that's where I came in; I got one of those appointments. Bill Thornton was appointed from Reno. He was legitimately a member of the gaming industry as a key

stock holder in Cal-Neva and at that time also in the Comstock—maybe, I'm not sure. The others represented the major hotels, both the north and south. There had to be one representing *rural* Nevada, and that was Dan Bilbao, who was the owner of the Stockmen's Hotel-Casino in Elko.

The meetings were *very* disappointing, for the most part. You have these ideals of how you see this bill panning out and all these things you see this group doing on behalf of the state, and then you just get into politics. I mean, it just is *very* discouraging. And Bob Cashell was determined to run that as his thing; the bill was written so that he could. But then he really didn't *care* that much, so he literally would not come to some of the meetings. (I don't even think we had a Vice Chair to start with.) He'd come, maybe halfway through the agenda, and he would say, "I have an appointment somewhere else." He'd get up and walk out. After he went through all that work to put himself where he could have done extraordinary things for the state, for himself politically, for everything . . . It's like, well, that toy kind of thing—he went on to something else that he was more interested in. He just wanted to kind of, you know, burst Dick Bryan's bubble and cause him trouble.

*And once he'd done that, he lost interest?*

Right. Right. Right. So this was extremely frustrating then for people who were trying to make this thing work.

One of the major things we had to do was hire a Director—a bonafide Director of tourism for the state—and we did. We had people apply from all over the country. We had interviews. We ended up hiring a man named Steve Richer from New Jersey, and his closest competitor was a woman named Barbara Klein. We looked at both of them as

potential to be the Director. I mean, they were both very impressive. In our little discussion, we said the ideal would be to get both of them, and somehow get Steve to be the Director and get Barbara to agree to be his assistant. (I don't think that was the term used.) Ultimately, that's what we did get. We got both of them, and they were both just superb in their skills. They started putting together a team of people then to be on the tourism staff. I'm not sure when all these people came on board, but Rich Moreno was active from the very beginning, and David Toll was an appointee for awhile, as well as Susan Lynn.

C.J. Hadley was editor of *Nevada Magazine*. She was when we first started, because that was one of the things that we kind of reined in to be a part of the Commission on Tourism's area of responsibility. *Nevada Magazine* had been published by the Department of Transportation, and now we felt it needed to be more integrated into all of this. When I was on the commission, we had some stormy meetings with C.J. where differences of opinion and all of that became a reality. A very talented woman—she just was very good at what she did, but these guys on the Tourism Commission were just really dead set on having their own agenda involved, and it was very difficult for *anybody* to work with them at that point.

*One of the first speeches that I heard when I was a new citizen of Nevada was C.J. Hadley in the Governor's mansion talking about her frustration with trying to produce Nevada Magazine under some very difficult situations. She cried, and I was so amazed that somebody would just sit there and cry, because this was such a mess for her.*

Well, that's kind of a style of C.J.'s that happens often. I'm not saying that it's artificial

in any way. That's just part of her make-up—she is so intense with what she does that I've seen her cry in public a number of times over issues she felt really strongly about and this was one of them. She was there, I think, the whole time that I was on the commission. But everybody was insisting that the magazine make money! [laughter] You can't just get from here to there immediately. There's a lot that needs to be done in order to make the magazine do that, and so she was there during the hard time.

The introduction of the Tourism Commission throughout the state was a very exciting thing. We traveled by plane and probably by Cashell's plane, although I traveled often with Dick Bryan in the Governor's airplane. I think it actually belonged to the Department of Transportation for them to use in reconnaissance work. Anyway, the Tourism Commission and the Governor and Lieutenant Governor traveled by air, and we had this elaborate staging of stops that included Winnemucca and Ely and Las Vegas.

I remember in Ely the entire White Pine High School band in full uniform being at the airport when we arrived and playing the fanfare. Oh, it was just a really incredible welcome. Then we had this caravan of cars that went into a luncheon at the convention center, and the band again played. This was the day we went to the railroad shops that were sitting there as if the ghosts of the former employees had just walked out the day before. We walked in and looked at those railroad shops, and the potential that that had for tourism in White Pine County, and the possibility of getting the Northern Nevada Railway group started—to have the Kennecott Copper people give some of the equipment and track, and that type of thing, so that it could be used as a tourism venture in that part of the state, *all* of which has come

to pass since then. But here we were on the very beginnings of approaching new avenues for tourism, particularly in rural Nevada, and that was very exciting.

*Because at that point, Ely probably was not a strong tourism center for Nevada?*

Oh, not at all. And it was *very* depressed economically, because the copper mining had ended.

*And that would have been typical of some of the other towns in Nevada, too?*

Oh, yes. Right. Well, you know, the economy of rural Nevada has come and gone *forever*, with ranching and mining, and being dependent upon the weather and amount of water. So to add the idea that something that the towns already cared about—which was their own history, their own museums, their own historic buildings—and to make them pay off in an economic sense, was just an idea whose time had come, although, it was only Bill Thornton and I who consistently pushed for that *end* of it. The other people on the Tourism Commission went along with us enough that we got some things on, but the people who were there representing the big hotels in Las Vegas and Reno really did not appear to care about what happened out in Ely and Winnemucca. We insisted that we ought to be creating a much closer role with State Parks. I remember getting State Park staff to come in and make a presentation, and I think that was one particular meeting where Bob Cashell was just a *pain*. I mean, he just didn't care. He didn't even help us follow through with the kind of agenda we had set up.

A lot of things were launched. The staff we hired was excellent. Out of that, we then

had quite a bit of money to hire ad agencies to help—rather than hire staff and staff and staff—to get experts in the field to do some of the marketing and develop some of the schematics of who we were and how we were going to market ourselves. Out of that came the concept of dividing Nevada into the different territories, because just to say, “Well, come to Nevada . . .” How can you describe what Nevada is in ten easy words? You can't. So it's a little easier if you take the part of the state and name it for the Pony Express trail that went through, which is mainly rural pioneer kinds of things, and another part which lends itself more to ranching and to call it cowboy country.

We divided the state into the five territories, one of which was the Reno-Tahoe territory and which packaged Reno, Lake Tahoe, Carson City, and Virginia City altogether. This has just worked extremely well from the beginning. That has been, I think, always the strongest territory, due to leadership within that territory of people like Kathy Farrell, Carol Pearson, Greg Wyler, Ann McMartin, and Vickie McGowan . . . and at the very beginning Larry Friedman, who later went to work for the state Tourism Commission as rural programming coordinator—just a strong group of people in the Reno-Tahoe area that were willing to develop as a team early on and just have done some extraordinary things to bring tourism into this area and to market the whole area as a region, which is what it needed to have happen. Then the Las Vegas territory was always kind of, “Geez, what are we going to do?” Because they saw themselves as kind of in competition with the Convention and Visitors Bureau, or the Convention and Visitors Bureau saw it as a competitive thing, and they had to figure out a way to work together.

We then started developing grant programs, particularly for the rural areas to

apply for money to help them gear up to be able to attract tourists and to deliver a good product once the tourists came. So all of that started in the early years that I was on the commission, and it was a very exciting time to be there, particularly during this 1983-1984 year when it all started.

The legislative session was in the spring of 1983. The commission was appointed in July or August. And so, I think, exactly in that fall is when Maxine and I started the tour company. It continued to build and was really somewhat at its peak the spring of 1985 when I agreed to go to work for Dick Bryan. I could tell, even then, that I was never going to be able to make a living at that. I loved doing it, but that was not the answer for me as far as a long-term . . . *ever* being able to retire on anything. [laughter]

What happened was that I was becoming more visible as an entrepreneur, as a businesswoman, and now as a businesswoman in tourism, as the Tourism Commission and its marketing program was just being born. In a way, I was really ahead of my time. If I had come along about now with ten, fifteen years of marketing of Nevada as a place to visit, I probably could have made the tour company work with much less capital and much quicker. What we did was struggle, because there was no statewide marketing plan telling people about us. That all was happening as we, ourselves, were being formed.

*And so, you didn't have the ready audience coming in that you needed?*

No, no, no. But we joined the National Tour Association, which was one of the major travel and marketing trade associations in the world. Anyone who's going to be active in Nevada in tourism—in the motor coach industry of bus tours and that type of thing,

or fly and drive—needed to belong to that organization. The state Tourism Commission needed to join, which it did, and we all needed to have a good presence at its biennial meetings in trade shows around the country. It was to our advantage to get those trade shows to come to Nevada. There were a whole group of organizations like that—the American Bus Association, then something called Travel International Association, which I had mentioned earlier that was more international travel and that I got Dick Bryan involved with during the campaign.

All of those groups take time and money, but that's what helps you find your markets. Nevada Discovery Tours did join the National Tour Association, and I was doing all of that at the same time I was on this new Tourism Commission. That did produce some political conflict, which was good for a few columns in the newspaper.

There was some tension between Cashell and Bryan in a whole range of areas. Cashell and I had never had any real problems before now. In fact, when he was on the Board of Regents, and I was in the state Senate, we worked together on a wide range of things. I felt he was really a good member of the Board of Regents; he certainly is a man who knows how to get things done and can be very charismatic, personality-wise, et cetera. But in tourism, we really were coming from different directions. Like I say, I think his main job—his main goal—was to cause Dick Bryan trouble. Whatever he could find to do that, he did. And he had his other agendas—he was off doing other things, going other places.

I started my tour company—Maxine and I—and we were just in the beginning of marketing our first set of tours that were really in conjunction with Gray Line of Southern Nevada. We had met with a man named Barry

Perea, who was the head of Gray Line. We were looking for a way to get somebody else to help us market our tours, because it's just so expensive. How do you find people out there in the world who want to take your tour on the day that you intend to leave—who want to be in Las Vegas and have paid enough money in advance, so enough people are going that you can pay your way. So we looked at a joint venture type of thing with Barry Perea and Gray Line, because they were very good at marketing themselves. Parts of that worked, but parts of it didn't. It was difficult to arrive at a good understanding with Barry, and we were very new to the business.

Our very first tour that we marketed to the general public as a whole was called "Marigolds and Glory Holes." It was March 30 and April 1, 1984. Now it took us a good six to eight months of planning and designing brochures and getting the tours all set up. We set up a year's worth of tours—six different tours scattered throughout different parts of the year—and this was our inaugural offering, mainly for Nevadans to get out and see their own state.

The other way that we were going to make it was to offer our services to tour companies who would sell the tour in Minneapolis or San Diego. Tourists would come by plane or train or bus to Las Vegas, and we would become their guide once they got to Nevada, and we would plan their whole Nevada experience. Those were things we would do by connecting with tour companies through the National Tour Association. So we moved into this in a multi-faceted kind of way.

The other thing we could do is take a local organization and organize a tour for them to go wherever they wanted to go, although we were concentrating really on Nevada and the National Parks around Las Vegas, Death Valley in California, the Grand Canyon in

Arizona, and Zion in Utah. So we didn't see ourselves in the travel business, like taking people to Europe or things like that. We were *truly* oriented to Nevada and southwestern national parks.

Well, we got Bonnie Bryan to be an honorary tour guide on our very first tour. Now Maxine and I were on the tour as coordinators. We got Bill Fiero, the geologist—and I think we've talked about that tour Bill and I led in 1980 for Continuing Education. We got him to come back and be on the tour as the geologist, and a friend of his named Pat Leary as a botanist from the community college. So we had those people as experts, and then we had Bonnie Bryan, First Lady of Nevada.

Well, lo and behold, Bob Cashell decides that this is somehow a conflict of interest for Bonnie and for me, because I'm on the Tourism Commission, and now he thinks that Bonnie should not go. The easiest way to describe this is to quote a newspaper clipping, a U.P.I. release that came out February 23, 1984. So this is like a month before my first tour: "Lieutenant Governor Bob Cashell says he doesn't think First Lady Bonnie Bryan should be hiring on as a guide for tour business operator Jean Ford of Las Vegas. She will be aboard the first tour of Death Valley, Tonopah, Beatty, and Goldfield in a promotion sponsored by Ms. Ford, who is just getting into the tour business. Ms. Ford, a former state Senator, said pay was discussed with Ms. Bryan, but that plan was nixed, and the tour will be comped instead."

From the beginning, she was doing it as an honorary guide to help promote this new way of seeing Nevada. Cashell made this disclosure while speaking to a Republican women's club. Now, right off the bat, you have to realize that there is something going on here. He had switched parties during the previous year from Democrat to Republican.



“Mrs. Bryan said she did not see any problem. She is presently the guest of Eastern Airlines on a visit to Tampa, Florida, to promote tourism in Nevada.” (There is no difference between the two.) “Cashell also complained that Ms. Ford, a member of the state Tourism Board, was promoting her personal business during a recent trip by the commission through rural Nevada. ‘I don’t know if that’s a conflict, but it sure looks funny to me,’ said Cashell. Ms. Ford said she did talk to people about her tour business, but there was nothing wrong with that.”

Everybody on the commission was in the tour business, and the fact that I was starting a new tour company and had these new tours of Nevada in the very area where we were trying to promote tourism, to him, *did* look like a conflict. To me, it was helping carry out everything that the Tourism Commission was all about. I don’t think I was doing anything more than the big guys who were with the hotels and were talking about their interests at the appropriate times as well.

Well, various people picked up on it one way or another. John Hayes of the capital bureau of the *Nevada Appeal* followed up on this. He interviewed me, interviewed Cashell, and, of course, built it up even more. In talking with me, he quotes me as saying that we all passed out business cards when we met people, and then it says members of the commission must be in some segment of the tourism business to be appointed. So the final thing was in a column in the Reno paper where—basically the *Saints and Sinners* column—they looked at Cashell in this case as a “sinner” and said that he was really stretching it for reaching out to criticize Bonnie Bryan when she was simply doing this as part of her effort to promote tourism. They felt that he had gone a little too far, and so it kind of died down.

*Did the rift between you and Bob Cashell over that ever mend over the years? Would you say it’s still there?*

I don’t think it ever, ever mended. These are things that are common when you get into political commissions. It just died down. I went on then and have worked with Cashell on issues of common interest since then, so we certainly are not enemies. I mean, there is no reason for that to happen. Our lives have gone in different directions, but that particular time I was disappointed that he didn’t *give* the attention and the time—give his talent that he has—to making the Tourism Commission work better. That was what I wanted him to do.

I also was struggling to make a living myself. I felt there was really a future in working in Nevada tourism in this manner, and it was like the time that Hank Greenspun put me down. I didn’t *need* that. Those kinds of things really didn’t help me with my business. I mean, they just made it look like I’m somebody that, if you work with me, your name will get in the paper in the wrong way or something like that, and it didn’t help.

*And those were the kinds of things when you were struggling for financial independence that were a hardship for you?*

That’s right. That’s right. Yes, but certainly for the next two years Maxine and I worked at our tour company. It was a legitimate tour company. The spring of 1985 was our busiest time. We brought several tours to the Legislature. We did something called “legislative action special”, and we would bring people who wanted to see the Legislature in action, who wanted to do it and combine it with a cultural history trip at the same time.

Recently, I went back and was looking at the slides of the tours we led. In the spring of 1985 we were out of town more than we were in. We were on the road all the time with tour groups. That was fine. We were breaking even, or even making money at that point, but unless you had an equal number scheduled for the fall and the following spring, or you had somebody out marketing that while you were out leading the tours you had sold six months ago, then you weren't going to make it in the long-run, financially. And that's what was happening—we liked too much leading the tours, when that wasn't the economic thing for us to do. We should be *hiring* people to work at less money or to work at not much money, so we could be selling next year's tours while this year's tours were out on the road. We did some of that, but we really liked leading the tours.

Maxine and I would talk to each other and we would find a way to make money other ways. Like, she was an accountant, so she had some accounts that she did for little businesses that brought in some income. I had my business accounts through the Jean Ford Company, where I was the consultant to the Nevada Association for the Handicapped and the Library District and others, and I was always making money other ways. We had our convention programming for spouses that we did through the Jean Ford Company. We realized that we were doing the tour company for fun, and we were having to subsidize it by earning money some other way. That, for neither one of us, was a good long-term picture. We weren't going to be able to make a living that way.

*And I'm sure that part of the attraction of the tours, though, was to have you and Maxine as tour guides.*

It was. It was. That's what made the tour really great. So it's a "Catch 22." How do we

train others to do the kinds of things we were good at? Or how do we train somebody else to stay on a phone all day long and market us to other tour companies? That's the world of business. That's what any little tour company has to go through. They do make it by volume, by having enough capital to sustain them through the times until their name is well-enough known.

*And how long did you have the company open?*

Well, about two years, I would say. One example of a tour booked and scheduled was an AAA [Automobile Association of America] group coming in from Crawford County, Ohio. These were people that we had met at these trade shows all over the country, and who thought they had a market in their little travel club to come to Nevada, so then they hired us to plan the trip. That particular group was just incredible. They flew in from central Ohio, somewhere northeast of Dayton, somewhere in the middle of the state. We planned about a six-day, five-night trip by bus, which started in Las Vegas, then went up through Valley of Fire along Lake Mead; picked up the Western Village Casino-Ranch in Mesquite where we took them horse-back riding; then on to Zion National Park; then on around to the Grand Canyon in Arizona; and then back around into Las Vegas, where the last thing we did the last night was go to the show where my daughter was one of the star dancers in "Jubilee" at Bally's on the Las Vegas Strip. And, of course, then have her come and meet with the tour after the show. We just gave them all these "insider" elements that a lot of tour people didn't have, and they just had a wonderful time. It was very, very successful.

The AAA club has chapters in many major cities. At an NTA trade show there may be thirty

different AAA travel clubs from all over the United States. Another one that we did business with was out of Minneapolis, and that group flew into Reno. Actually, I did things for them twice. When they flew into Reno was when I was working for Bill Thornton later on. But it was typical of the kinds of things we would do. We took them all around the lake, down the gold country to Yosemite and back up Highway 395 to Reno. So these were the kinds of tours that you could make money on—where you would be out for several days and you could build in a profit per person over and above the expenses that it was going to cost you to deliver the tours.

*Yes. Were the tours that lasted several days—maybe five or six days—were those more profitable than the short tours that you had started out doing? Or can both be profitable?*

Both can be profitable. It's just how they end up getting marketed. Of course, Mary Forrester was kind of working for both of us—the tour company and the Jean Ford Company. We were just putting all kinds of time and energy into customizing tour descriptions and direct mail pieces to follow up with the tour operators that we met at the trade shows. We did call it “Discovering the Other Nevada: Beyond the glitter and glamour of the Las Vegas Strip, there is another Nevada ready to share with you its special brand of Western hospitality and charm.” This is the way we would lead into it.

It was a *very* exciting business to be in. We really enjoyed it. The tours we led, we knew people loved doing them. It's just that we didn't have the capital to keep going while we could market ourselves enough to build up a continuity of business.

*You said the business lasted two years. How did the decision come to stop doing that?*

Well, it was cumulative. This was not the only thing we were doing. Each of us were working on contracts that we had—I through the Jean Ford Company; Maxine, as an entrepreneur accountant. We were just continuing to try to make it work and see how we could market ourselves more successfully when Dick Bryan called and said, “Would you be willing to move to Carson City?” This was in August of 1985. If there had been a year's worth of solid bookings of business, I probably would have said no, but there wasn't. There were scattered bookings of tours, but we were still struggling to figure out how to reach people.

We'd had to cancel several of the tours. The *hardest* thing to do is to fill the bus one person at a time or a couple at a time. That we learned early on. We put too much effort into that when we should have put more effort into marketing ourselves to other tour companies like the AAA groups, because *they* then sold the tour. Then all the time we spent would have been delivering a product that we already knew how to deliver, and that didn't take us as much time.

*And would they guarantee a group?*

Right, but sometimes those groups canceled. They would buy from us a tour, and we would do all the work of designing it and come up with a package they thought they could sell. We all knew there was a deadline—that if they hadn't sold a minimum number by X time, neither of us got anything out of it. So there were some of those, too.

At the same time, we were really doing a *lot* of work with conventions. So we were marketing ourselves in that way for step-on guides. Like a convention might know that they wanted just the Gray Line tour to Hoover Dam, but they wanted somebody extra to

provide more local color information. We could do both, and we had other people who worked for us who we could market as step-on guides, and we would make a little bit off of placing them with some company that wanted that. So we offered step-on guide service.

We also offered something called “Las Vegas Welcome.” This would be to other tour companies: “Get your tour off to a good start with a warm welcome from a long-time resident; inside hints on how to make the most of a Las Vegas visit; informal orientation to the many opportunities of gaming entertainment.” We would be like a little local Chamber of Commerce, meet with the group their first night in town and give them the inside story on where the best buffets were, where they could shop, and where the best entertainment was for their free time, along with information on sightseeing attractions throughout southern Nevada and California, Arizona and Utah. We could make up information kits for the people coming in that would have all of this together, rather than their having to get them off of racks here and there. We could offer optional activities such as booking a professional gambler who can discuss and demonstrate basic gaming rules and strategies. We could do a slide show of the attractions in the area. And so that was another thing that we would offer with hosts and hostesses. We represented no Las Vegas property and could be objective in our advice for getting the greatest value for the money.

*I’m struck, as you talk about operating these two companies, about how much time and energy it must have taken for you.*

Oh, it was a twenty-four-hour-a-day operation [laughter] for both Maxine and

me and Mary, whom we paid. Mary was just phenomenal in the nuts-and-bolts types of stuff. Once we had something booked, she could just get it all scheduled and make all the necessary arrangements and get all the right contracts off of the word processor. We had, for that day, a fairly elaborate word-processing system, computer and accounting program and other things, that helped us do this easier.

*The advent of computers into the business.*

Oh, it was, and Mary was very good at all of that, as was Maxine, since she was an accountant by education and training.

This was by far the most diverse time because, basically, if somebody wanted to pay us to do something, and we felt we could do it, [laughter] we were willing to try. We were pretty broad.

A report I developed summarized doing business as Jean Ford Associates beginning in December 1980 and then bringing some ongoing contracts into the Jean Ford Company and adding new things. One area of our business was related to research and data collection, which we haven’t talked about at all:

We got a contract to develop an inventory of post-secondary educational opportunities available in the state of Nevada in 1981. It was a \$38,000 project designed, coordinated, researched and edited by Jean Ford Associates—Jean Ford and Mary Forrester, Project Directors. Now, over a four-month period we designed forms, identified the providers, sent out the mailing, hired researchers and trained them, collected the data, sorted it, edited it and then put the final results in camera-ready form for publication. This contract was with the state of Nevada—the Nevada Educational Information Centers Program at the university in Reno. They used

this to send out to career counselors and libraries and others all over the state. So this was basically a research and data collection project, which we did in-house, hiring some people part-time to help on the phases that we needed help on. It came out of our computer camera-ready, and copies are still available.

Then we built on that skill and got a contract with the state job training office in 1983 to do an occupational education and training directory. And this was an update of the 1981 inventory with more emphasis on occupational training. This was then done by Jean Ford and Mary Forrester as the Project Directors, and this was done under the Jean Ford Company. So we had administration, supervision, bookkeeping, training and clerical services all provided by us, and we hired some staff as independent contractors for the project.

Then in 1982-1983, the university got a grant from the U.S. Department of Education Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE). The university got a \$42,000 grant and ended up hiring the Jean Ford Company—me as the Director and Mary Forrester as the assistant—to organize the project, and we did that. We designated a state-wide advisory committee. We coordinated research on labor market trends, education, and training needs. We contacted representatives of business, libraries, job development and the university system, and we explored high-demand occupations in which articulation between one school and another would be important—like how could people go to the college and then get credit for everything they did at community college when they went on to the university.

These were the early days when they were beginning to look at education and career paths that made sense, and so this project was to really help design new paths in

the educational system in Nevada. I worked directly for the Chancellor's Office in carrying out this project under supervision of Vice-Chancellor Warren Fox. It was a three-year grant, and we basically worked at it one year. At the end of the first year, we mutually agreed to drop the whole thing, because I could not find support within the university system for continuing it. There was so much politics and so much turf between the universities and the community colleges that they did not want this project to succeed. And I could not get the Chancellor's Office to back me up to the extent that we could make it happen. The Chancellor was Robert Bersi. The person who hired me to do this was a fabulous guy, Warren Fox, who left then soon after and went to California to work for the university system over there. But that was a very positive experience at the beginning, and it was the kind of contract that . . . you know, \$42,000 could keep you going for awhile. It included travel money and everything so you could build on that, and you could do a whole lot of neat things, and I could have continued that project for two more years, but I could not see doing it if I couldn't see it succeeding in the way that we set out to do. The parameters were not there for succeeding at the end of the first year. I was unwilling just to take the money and just kind of [laughter] march in place, is what it would have been. It would have been just kind of hanging on, trying to make something happen that nobody wanted to have happen.

*It was going to be designed so that students at community colleges could take courses and then move on through the educational system?*

And there were already some examples of where that could happen. There were already examples, but what we needed was like the nursing school at the university and the health



care programming at the community college to talk to each other and to agree that they were going to work out one path.

*So a student could start at the community college and then work into the nursing program at the university?*

That's right, and that was built in. You knew when going into this program that that would work, because there would be agreements, but the people in charge of these educational programs did not want to do that. Now I am being simplistic. There were bright spots in all of this—people who cared—but I needed the Presidents of each of these campuses to knock heads. [laughter] I needed them to buy into this and say this is worth doing. There was a meeting at which Presidents came together regularly, and I met with them several times. They knew this project was happening. There was lots of good material from other parts of the country about the advantages of all this to the students and, politically, ultimately to the institutions. But they had other agendas; they were not interested in working on it.

Finally, I just gave up. I just really couldn't see it happening. I think it is one of the very few FIPSE grants that ever got given back to the U.S. Government. I mean, these were coveted federal grants that states just really worked hard to get. Someone had spent a lot of time writing this grant up, but they didn't have anyone in mind to be the Project Director when they did it. I was, again, at the right place at the right time to get the job, but we just didn't have a critical mass of people who cared about its outcome. So that didn't last.

*Has it changed since then?*

There is *much* progress in that area. I think since then the Board of Regents . . .

the Legislature may even have dictated that progress be made in this area.

*So if that kind of thing had come along today, there would be a whole different atmosphere about it?*

Right. That's right.

Another thing we did was publish a book called *The Nevada Legislative Almanac*, and we did that in 1983. This was an idea that we got from a woman in Colorado who had done it there, and so the first year we published it through her company. This was a really political booklet on the 1983 session. (And, of course, I was not in the Legislature now.) We did profiles of every legislator. We included all this material that was now available due to bills that I had been instrumental in getting passed, like "Who gave campaign contributions over \$500?" We included a list of all the campaign contributions to each person, and we included who endorsed them. So it was all this political information you couldn't find except by doing a lot of personal research and maintaining your own filing system. We pulled all this data together and then sold this book for fifteen dollars, and it was *highly* received. We broke even. We made some money on it the second year.

Again, we were moving in too many different directions. You know, each one of these had its own project status and budget, but we needed to be doing more volume in fewer items. We liked doing everything we did. [laughter] One example under the heading of Research and Data Collection was the 1982 directory of senior services in Clark County which was commissioned and distributed by Thalia Dondero who was on the County Commission at the time.

We did another group of things under Public Relations and Public Affairs. This

would have been the contract with the Library District to provide consulting to them regarding library-related legislation that was happening, and the Job Training Partnership Act, and how it was going to affect libraries. We, for awhile, managed the Las Vegas Symphony and Chamber Music Association. Actually, Mary Forrester again did the bulk of that. She took on that contract for us. That was when the symphony was a real fledgling, and we did their publicity, program design, ticket sales, bookkeeping services, and designed and produced their radio and television public service announcements. The contract was with the President of the board of the symphony, who was a former legislator, Zel Lowman.

For the Nevada Association for the Handicapped we helped them develop a whole program of training parents of handicapped in rural and northern Nevada regarding special education services for handicapped children. McCarran International Airport—we provided a whole training series for their very first information guides at the airport on how to tell people about southern Nevada.

The National Women's Education Fund—now this was a *really* strong organization back in Washington, D.C. that had a grant to put together a series of trainers all across the country to help women become more effective in the world of politics and public affairs. I was chosen as one of seventy-five from across the United States brought together for a whole week of training. They had workshop modules about personal effectiveness of women in the political and personal realm of public affairs. There was a module on running campaigns; one on understanding power; one on organizing citizens for action. These had been written by real pros. We were at the 4-H training camp right outside of Washington, D.C. in Maryland. And of course, some

of the other trainers I knew from all these other worlds I had moved in—the League, the Legislature, parks service, the Women's Conference in Houston! It was old home week for some of us, but then we met all these *other* incredibly powerful women from all over the country.

For three years, there was a national office that marketed our services. I did those in at least twelve different states—Denver, Colorado, Dallas, Texas, Portland, Oregon.

One of the groups that *hired* the national office to do a whole series of these was the Methodist Church. This would have been about in 1984. It was the Women's Division, which is a national arm of the Methodist Church. *They* decided one of the things they wanted as a national goal was to get more women elected to state Legislatures. I mean, this is how far women's consciousness-raising had come by the 1980s—that a group like the Methodist Church would recognize the value of women getting into politics and getting elected to state Legislatures. They would sponsor it for the whole community, and I did at least three for the Methodist Church.

*That was one of those landmarks that really showed you how far the women's movement was coming?*

Oh, absolutely! *Absolutely*. I still have those training modules today and have used pieces of them in other workshops I have done on my own. It didn't become self-supporting. So when the *grant* ran out, then the project was over with. [We had many other contracts, under categories I called Community Services and Training and Development.]

*You have talked about how it was difficult to get training and speaking engagements*

*because people were accustomed to having your services free of charge as a public figure. Was that beginning to change now? Were people recognizing you as a business woman?*

Yes, yes, and part of that would be the consciousness-raising of organizations—that women *deserve* to get paid; that I *deserved* to get paid for what I was doing. [laughter] You don't see it happening here with the good old boys in the Chamber of Commerce too much, but part of it was my learning who to cultivate. I began to realize that the non-profit organizational world was one that I could work with successfully, like the Nevada Association for the Handicapped. That turned out to be a *really* very positive experience for me and for them. And then I had something to build on, and the word spreads then that I could be of value to an organization and it was worth the money to pay me. So yes, it was getting better, but here I was still trying to market myself in fifteen million directions.

*Let's talk about a typical day. What time did you get up? How did you have time for anything other than your work?*

[laughter] Well, the headquarters for all of this was my house at 3511 Pueblo Way in Las Vegas, and my family room was kind of the command headquarters where we had the two computer stations. We brought in an extra telephone line so that we could be calling out while people were calling in. We used one of the back bedrooms as my personal office, where I could go off, so we could be in separate parts of the house and be doing business rather than working out of the same room.

We did, from time to time, have other people there working with us, either doing

part-time accounting or when we had big conventions coming to town, we would have some of our step-on guides coming in to put packets together. There were all kinds of activities going on in the house, but for the most part it would be Mary and me. I set up the back bedroom as kind of my personal office with the extra telephone back there. I devoted almost all of my time to this. I never needed more than about six hours sleep.

Some of this time Jan was living at the house. Some of it she was gone, and she got her own apartment when she came back from Paris, when she could afford it. I had redecorated the house. I really *loved* that house. It had lots of glass windows and a real modern look. We were on the golf course, but I never played golf. [laughter] But we had nice landscaping by now, and it was really a nice house.

*So eighteen hours a day was spent on work?*

So I would be up reading the newspaper . . . always took the newspapers. To this day I cannot start my day without reading the newspapers, just seeing what's out there. I don't read them all that *carefully*, but I really scan sports very quickly and the stock market very quickly, but the news part of the paper, the community parts and the ads (to some extent) I read every day, and I did then too. Mary would be over for at least a part of every day, and we just continued to try to keep all these balls in the air, and we often had other people working for us for periods of time. Through the first part of it, working on the Bryan campaign, I was still a member of the state Senate until he was elected. That election, then, I was *out* of office but I was still very much a public figure.

I had speaking engagements, always. I now was very comfortable with speaking

engagements, because I was *in control* of what I was going to talk about, and I felt that was good public marketing for me for other things, so I did a lot of public speaking. I'm sure I served on some committees of organizations during this time as well—non-profit groups of one kind or another.

A typical day would be moving forward the top priorities that had to be dealt with for the immediate future, like, "What tour is coming to town next week?" Or, "What is the next convention that we have to be ready with all of our staffing on?" At the same time, you would have to spend some part of every day trying to follow up with phone calls you had made last month to people who might purchase your services a year from now. So you're *always* having to live in today's world and the world of two months ahead—making sure you had your employees all in line to be your step-on guides; get all of your meals booked in the right restaurants . . . you know, all these things you said you could do. Once you had really sold it, then you had to deliver, and then you still had to be selling for the future.

*Did you have weekends off? Did you go out for dinner in the evenings? Did you have time to yourself at all, or was it really all focused on running your business and earning a living?*

I did have time for myself. One of the things that evolved around this time—but even like in the 1970s—was that it was really fun to meet other women and have dinner with them. That had not been a part of my married experience at all. Again, this goes back to that whole tradition, that I was raised to be a helpmate to a man. Having my own mixture of personal friends, just because they were fun to be around and they were interesting in their own right, that just wasn't

part of the scene. At that point, women were competing with each other for the men in their lives. But through League, through these other activities which were not all, by any means, with just women, I got to know a lot of really exciting women who were just fun to be around. We did have things in common, and we had money enough that we could go out to dinner.

I *always* went to concerts. I always belonged to whatever the series was, like the symphony. There were always entertainers, and I enjoyed them coming to Las Vegas. Regarding the entertainers, I have something that kind of goes back to connections with my daughter. She had made some really strong connections with entertainers as part of being in show business herself. Well, there are like three stories, I think, that might be worth telling. One is Bill Cosby, who at that point in time was a regular at the Las Vegas Hilton—called the Las Vegas International to start with, and then the Hilton. Anyway, he would have a suite at the top of the Hilton, and he liked to cook gumbo when he came to town. So they did whatever they had to do for him to get the ingredients for gumbo, and then he would invite friends over to have gumbo. Jan became one of those people, first coming with someone who knew him, and then she got on his list of people he would call directly and say, "I'm in town and having gumbo. Come over." And so she got to know Bill Cosby reasonably well. He was better friends with some of the people she connected with, but one time when she was living at home, the phone rang and I answered it, and it was Bill Cosby. And he said, "Is that you, Mother?" He knew that I was Jan's mother. So Bill Cosby knew enough about Jan that he had her home phone, and he knew she was living at home, and he knew who I was.

It was so funny: "Is that you, Mother?" [laughter] And I said, "Yes, yes." So then he

just was trying to find out where she was and wanted to talk with her. Well, we went to his show one evening, and my mother-in-law went as well. So Jan and I and my mother-in-law met him in the bar before the show and had a drink. That was really fun, and he was just a really neat guy, really nice.

*And what kind of conversation did you have?*

I don't even remember. It was pretty small talk, I think, probably about Las Vegas and show business and what was going on at the various shows around town.

*Yes. But that was exciting for you, because in the 1980s he was becoming very popular.*

Yes, right, right. Another person that Jan connected with in a similar manner was Sammy Davis, Jr. and *his* particular interest—he was generally at Caesar's Palace and had a suite, one of their two-level suites—was playing charades. He *loved* to play charades. So when he would come to town, he would put out the call that he was in town, and Thursday at 3:00 a.m. was charade time. That would be after everybody would get off work from whatever shows they were in, and there would be this whole mixture of people that would converge on his suite, and they would play charades. So this was some of the interaction, some of the things that were just fun.

*Did you ever get to go to charades?*

No, no. Earlier, when the girls were younger, I remember going to Caesar's to see Paul Anka; and I mean they were much younger, because they wanted to go get his autograph backstage, which they did, and they just really were very excited at that, and so it

was nice. He is still around, I noticed. He is on somebody's billboard this week [November 24, 1997]. [laughter]

Then there were entertainers who lived all around us. Not those people, but there were several houses on our block that hotels ended up buying and having available as their guest housing for entertainers. [laughter] Those houses were all over in the area where I live. Some of the real advantages of having this whole world of show business is that producers and choreographers would have kids in school and would come and help produce shows in the high school or junior high, so there was *lots* of interaction of the show business world with the non-show business world in all kinds of positive ways.

*It wasn't separate, the Las Vegas downtown, the Strip, and the Las Vegas neighborhood community?*

No, not at all. The gaming community was *very* much mixed in the residential neighborhoods with non-gaming, and so our kids' friends' parents would be involved in show business or gaming of one kind or another.



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WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN THE 1980S

Well, I think the other part of the mix during those years was what was happening with the women's movement all across the country and then in *my* life. Part of what I was doing now was making a living off of some of the skills I had developed by doing workshops. I did workshops for the Women's Political Caucus on how to run for office and when, and we did those three different times.

"Women Winning in 1982" and "Women Winning in 1984," and we had brochures and, again, that would be part of my business. The people who came to those workshops are now in public office. One of the first ones was at Maya Miller's ranch in Washoe Valley. Courtney Swain (before that she had a different name, Courtney Jameson) came as somebody that was interested in possibly running and ultimately she *did* run. One of her main interests was Planned Parenthood and the whole choice issue, and one of the things we talked about in this workshop was how you have to have a broader base than something like Planned Parenthood. That is not going to win you an election. In fact, you are going

to have to find a way to *hide* it now and then in the middle of other things, because some people would vote for you because you were a strong Planned Parenthood advocate, but you needed to get one more vote than your opponent to win that election.

Well, some of the advice that we gave at that workshop was that you needed to broaden your base and learn about other avenues of community life, besides just the ones that an individual perhaps had been in and which might be more narrow than *should* be, to reach a broad base of people. I remember her later talking about how she followed our advice and joined the PTA or joined the Symphony Society. She was interested in running, and she felt like she needed to broaden her image, and so she did that; and in her case, it worked! She was elected.

Other people . . . I think Jan Evans was at an early workshop we had. I mean, we're not saying that they ran simply because they came to these workshops, but they were helpful to people. Jan has been in the Assembly for, I

think this is about her seventh term. Another one we had later was at Sorenson's Resort down in Hope Valley below Gardnerville. Mary Coffey was active with us by then in the Women's Political Caucus. Her daughter and son-in-law own that resort, and we ended up having the workshop there. A station wagon full of people from Las Vegas came up together. I was in the wagon, and then some that were going to be participants in the workshop. One woman in particular (and I can't remember her name) had come definitely planning to run. At the end of the workshop she decided that it was not the best thing for her to do. We did her a big favor [laughter] by having this workshop and having her see that it wasn't going to be for her. Just the whole mix of what her life was at that point in time, and having her see the realistic picture of what was involved, really helped her understand what kind of commitment she and her family would have to make. That didn't appear to be in the cards, so I think that was best. So some good things like that came out of them, too.

Someone else who came to that one down in Hope Valley was Sue Smith, who I just saw recently and who said, "I remember that workshop I came to, where you taught me how to run." She then went on. She was probably another one that we said, "You've got to broaden your base," because she was a real rabble rouser in her part of Reno over zoning issues or growth issues. She was real involved in that kind of thing. Well, she was then elected to the Reno City Council and served at least one term and was a good member of the council. So out of this came people who ran for the Legislature, people who ran for city council, school board. If I saw the list of participants, I could tell you more.

Others who were colleagues of mine would come and be part of the team to make

presentations, like Helen Foley, who was then in the state Senate, Sue Wagner and others who had played a variety of roles.

I was still active on the national level in the women's movement as well. You know, I had planned on being in the state Senate for a long time. [laughter] And so one of the things that I did in 1980 was get involved in the planning of a national conference of women legislators from all over the country. This was with the Center for the American Woman and Politics at Rutgers University. I was on the planning committee, and ultimately that conference was held at Cape Cod in 1982. That was one of the last things I did as a state Senator. Now I had already announced I was not running for re-election, so I was a lame duck, but in the spring or summer is when that conference was held. So I was still technically in office until the new election in the fall.

I helped put that conference on at Cape Cod. That was very exciting, because that was exactly ten years from the conference they had done earlier . . . the stories I had read with such awe and had used in speeches and workshops starting in the mid-1970s. So here we were in 1982 having the second conference of women legislators. A few of those who had been at that first one were there. By that time women legislators had doubled throughout the country, I'm sure. I think it was about five percent when I was first elected, and now it's up about twenty-five percent all across the country—an average. It had gone up each election year, so by 1982 there was a much higher percentage.

I helped put that conference on, and that was a really good experience and kept me in touch with the Center for the American Woman and Politics. I went back and did another Women in Politics class at the university. I had done that first one in 1976, I think it was, and we had such an

overwhelming response for the first one of 150 people. So we called this Women in Politics II, and we drew a good crowd, but not as large as 1976. In the meantime, we had sent a survey to everyone who took the first one and asked, "What have you done in politics?" We found that some hadn't done anything, and others had run for office, and others had gotten all involved in a variety of ways. Then we built the second one around things we learned from people who had been in the first one, and that was then in 1982 as a part of Continuing Education.

One of the other things we did in 1980 was create a Nevada Elected Women's Network just among the elected women in the state of Nevada. I was one of the founders of that. Again, Helen Foley was involved; Sue Wagner and Jan Evans; Joan Swift, who was the County Recorder in Clark County at that time; and Judi Bailey, the Washoe County Clerk. We are not just talking about the Legislature. We are talking about any woman in elected office. All the people I have just mentioned felt it was much more important to get women together and encourage women to be active in politics than it was to play partisan politics. So we didn't care what parties people were from. We just wanted to be kind of mentors to women coming up—that it was OK to get involved in politics.

We sponsored "Elected Women's Day" at the Legislature. The first one of those was in 1981, which was my last session in office, and that was a big success, and we had women come. First we had to make a list of all the elected women in the state, which was no small task, but we did, and we had a database that we used for sending invitations out. This included school board, hospital trustees, county commissioners, justice of the peace, sheriff. We started keeping a data base at that point of all the women in elected office in the state. I had it on my own computer.

Of course, when I then started my business, it was to my advantage to have those kinds of lists, which I could use in selling the *Legislative Almanac* and inviting people to workshops. I remember women coming from Tonopah to the first Elected Women's Day at the Legislature in 1981, who had never been to Carson City, and yet they were elected officers in their own county. They were like county clerk or county treasurer or county recorder, and for them to come and mingle with other women because they had been elected to office in Nevada was just very empowering. You could see it.

One of the women that was very active in this group was Yvonne Bernard, who was the Auditor/Recorder in Douglas County. We met a lot of women from local government that had never gotten together to talk about what is it like to be a woman in politics. We had good meetings in 1981. In 1983 we also had a good meeting. Although I was out now, I came back and helped run the meeting.

Then the group was pretty dormant for awhile. There really was not a group of women who came along after us who cared like we did about this. So it gradually died out until the early 1990s when Dina Titus in the Senate and Jan Evans and Sandy Krenzer in the Assembly liked the idea of reviving it. I was, of course, living in Carson City then and took on the job of helping organize Elected Women's Day at the Legislature. We had set it up where once you were elected, you were always eligible to be a member. So it was elected women plus alumni, because we felt there was a value in that, so I still helped organize that.

*When you say there was a period of time where there wasn't a group who cared as much about that, to what do you attribute that?*

Just to the building pressures of life in general. I mean, the time constraints—what

it takes to be in public life and make a living somewhere else or have a family. You have to have half a dozen people for whom this is going to be a major priority. It's like in any non-profit volunteer endeavor. You have to have a critical mass of people volunteering, if you want to make it work.

*Did it have anything to do with the fact that you were the group that had broken some ground?*

I think it could have, right. I mean that was part of our lives. That was our wave of, I guess, contribution to things. It was still new to be a woman in politics. By the mid-1980s, it wasn't as new. Women were achieving success all over the country and moving into positions of leadership.

*They might have had more informal ways of meeting each other, too maybe, than had been available to you?*

Right, right. And we were there at times when we weren't as integrated with what the *guys* were doing. So it was to our advantage to get together and support each other. Eventually your goal is that you don't need a woman's group, because you've got the men and women working together. And some of that was happening, too.

The Network wasn't a high enough priority for enough people to make it continue, but there were other organizations. In the early 1980s the Nevada Women's Political Caucus was still very active with *very* active chapters in Las Vegas, Reno, Carson and Douglas County. People like Jill Derby, Alicia Smalley, Mary Coffey gave extraordinary leadership; Diana Glomb, here in the Reno area; a woman named Jean Bonar, who later moved to California; Jill Winter. They all worked to keep these women's organizations going. They

were still extremely active then, and several of us went to the national conventions of these groups, which were always just awe-inspiring.

I went to about three different national conventions of the National Women's Political Caucus, although it was never the organization to which I gave most of my commitment. The League had been my major organization, but once I moved as a woman into active politics, then the Women's Political Caucus really met more of my needs than the League, because I was beyond going to League meetings and studying the issues the way the League did. I would come back and work with the League, and I will always belong to the League, but giving time to the Women's Political Caucus made more sense then because it fit with what I was doing, and it helped encourage more women. I could now see the value of moving from League into the real world of action. Not that the League isn't still extremely important for the role it plays, but the *power* is in these positions of being elected or appointed to office. One of the things that the Women's Political Caucus supported on a national level was getting women into key appointments in national and state government. In fact, they would hold workshops and they influenced Presidents. They put up lists of women who were extremely talented women that were potential appointees. From President Reagan on up, they said, "You know, I would appoint good women if I knew who they were." Well, we could give them a list from A to Z of women who had talents in all these arenas around the country, and the caucus was just phenomenal in helping make that happen.

So I went to national conventions of the Caucus in San Jose and in San Antonio and in Albuquerque that I can remember. They were always *very* exciting, and most of the time I was on the program of those groups. So the women's movement continued to be of great

interest to me, and when I *could*, I was making money by being a part of it as a trainer or a public speaker. I was also volunteering a lot of my time to continue to help make those kinds of things happen here in this state.

Mary Gojack served one term in the Senate, which would have been 1974 to 1978. That was when I was in the Assembly and then the one session I was out. Well, in 1980 she ran for the U.S. Senate against Paul Laxalt and lost. Then in 1982, she ran again, and this time for the U.S. Congress against Barbara Vucanovich in the district of northern Nevada. I was certainly supportive of her in the 1982 election. I wrote a letter to the voters in my district enthusiastically endorsing her. Now, I did not live in her congressional district, but I wanted everybody to know where I stood, and I issued press releases endorsing her. So I did what I could. When you're off in your own political world, it's hard. But I said that I felt she had "a winning combination of compassion and competence and would do a superb job of representing the people in the Congressional District Two," and urged them to give her their vote.

Sue Wagner, during this time, remained in the Assembly in the late 1970s, and then by 1981 had come over to the Senate. So we were together in the Senate in 1981, and she proceeded to stay there. The Republicans actually gained majority power in the Senate during the 1980s, which enabled her to chair the Judiciary Committee. So the pattern continued of predominantly non-attorneys running that committee. She *loved* chairing that committee. That was really, I think, a very high point for her. It was a very important committee. She loved the opportunity to run the committee the way she thought a committee ought to be run—one that I never got, because I was never in the right place at the right time to actually chair a committee.

We remained close friends, and the three of us (Mary, Sue and I) during the late 1970s, did a lot of public speaking together. They called it our "dog and pony show." There was, I think, a large rural Nevada women's conference out in Elko, and we were invited to come out and do a workshop on women in politics for that, and a whole range of things like that. We often were on the speaking circuit together.

Also during that time, Sue's husband was killed in a plane crash. He worked for Desert Research Institute and was out on a cloud-seeding expedition over toward Verdi in that part of the Sierra, and the plane went down and he was killed. That was just a tremendous blow to her, and all of us who could tried to rally around and help with that blow. She really thought a lot about whether she should continue in the world of politics and government. Her kids were not too old then. I think they were maybe ten and twelve, or something like that. But she decided to continue.

In 1979 Sue was on the Assembly Ways and Means Committee by this time—a *very* powerful position to be on the money committee. This is the session that she chose to use that power to get money appropriated for displaced homemakers' centers, which we did not have at that point. The whole idea of displaced homemakers was becoming one that we were all aware of. This was a woman who would find herself alone and basically in charge of her own care, her own life financially, et cetera, due to divorce or death or desertion from her spouse, and ordinarily would be older women who had been full-time homemakers. So it would be women of my generation—the type that I had been—where they were raised to be full-time homemakers and then find themselves later in life, alone and in charge, but not feeling



that they could go out into the workplace, or not having the skills to go to work, and not knowing what to do or how to cope. This was a big phenomena about that time. Now, it isn't that it hadn't happened before, but all of a sudden the numbers increased and the visibility increased.

*And it was a change from financial dependence to financial independence that was the real challenge. Is that right?*

Yes, right, right. This also brought to the foreground some of the discriminatory laws that didn't even give women the right to inherit things when husbands did die or leave. So, anyway, displaced homemakers' centers had been started in some other parts of the country where a woman could come and find a support group, could learn, could have her skills assessed, could even get some job training, could be helped with resumé writing; it just helped them see that they *could* go on alone and that good things could happen as a result of that.

Well, Sue got some money appropriated to start displaced homemakers centers. The first was a pilot project, as I recall, in Clark County Community College. I was on the advisory board, and a group of us went down there to meet with them, and they hired a woman from Colorado who'd had a lot of experience in running displaced homemakers centers, and this was a really wonderful project.

I have forgotten the exact date, but Sue's husband's death came right about the same time that that center opened down there. She experienced in her own life the feeling of being a displaced homemaker. Now, again, she did not have to worry financially at that point. There was enough insurance, et cetera, that she didn't have to drop everything and go get a nine-to-five job. But just as I had

experienced all those feelings when my husband left in 1977, she was experiencing this from the death of her husband. It was just ironic that both of us would have that personal experience that would make us even more realize the need for help for women who were going through this.

*At the same time you were working on a solution for it, you found yourselves in that situation.*

Right, that's right. That's right. So I remember her coping with all of this. She's a strong lady and really went on to continue to do great things and then to meet even greater crises with her own plane crash on primary election day. I guess that was about 1990.

So the three of us remained in touch. Ultimately, Mary had breast cancer and other cancer that spread. She lost those elections to Congress, then she looked around for other ways to be active. She ran some political campaigns for awhile. She and some friends in Reno thought of setting up their own political campaign agency. I think one campaign they worked on was Jud Allen's run for mayor in the early 1980s, so I think they worked on his campaign and some others. She remained very active in consumer causes. She had worked on getting the sales tax off of food, which ultimately did happen at the ballot—the people of Nevada voted that—and she was active in the Women's Political Caucus and just a lot of other kinds of things, but she was not in public office after that.

*You've described that these were both professional relationships and personal relationships.*

Yes.

*And you had mentioned at one point, going on a trip with Mary Gojack before she passed away?*

Well, she passed away in November of 1985. That was right at the time I was, in fact, just coming to Carson City to work for Dick Bryan. I came up in August of that year to visit the office and do a preliminary check on some things. I was to come back officially October 1.

That August I stayed with Mary, and we actually took a day-long trip up into Graeagle, Sierraville, and that area. She was feeling good enough to get out, and Bob Gorrell, her husband, drove. We just had a fabulous day out in the sunshine and fall weather. Just the beginning of fall colors was coming in, and that was just really a great day to have together.

*It was one of the last special times you had?*

Right, it was. It was, because then when I came back in October, she was really almost an invalid by that time. I think she was still at home when I came back in from leading a FAM trip [familiarization tour] for the National Tour Association coming up from Laughlin. This was one of the things that I had carried over from being involved on the Tourism Commission, and I got permission from Dick Bryan to take the day off to go back down south and help lead that FAM trip to Reno for this big convention. The afternoon I arrived in Reno, I went to the hospital to see her, and she died the next day. So it was early November, and she had become increasingly weak. Then there was a wonderful memorial service for her about a week later at the university, and I was one of a dozen people that spoke.

She was a wonderful, wonderful person. One of the things that she was doing—which

is interesting to think back—is that she felt very strongly about making sure her personal and political papers got taken care of. This was long before the idea of preserving papers had ever entered my mind, but she was seeing that her papers did get to the Special Collections at UNR. And actually right now, I think they have thirty-five cubic feet of her papers, including diaries that none of us have ever read. I've really thought about wanting to go up there and read some of that. She was working with Lee Kosso, who was working in Special Collections at the time. She actually started this idea of a "Women in Politics" collection.

As a result, Lee Kosso wrote a letter to some of us who were still active in public life saying, "What do you think of a Women in Politics collection at UNR, and if we had it, would you use it? Would it get used?" And I recall answering that I thought it was a wonderful idea, but I questioned that I would ever use it. Isn't that funny? I mean, because here in the last five years I have been using things up there constantly. But back then I was still off on another track, out making a living, et cetera.

I was very supportive of the idea, and they got a supportive response. Well then Lee retired, actually soon after that, and never really carried through on it or ran into some obstacles within the university library. I don't know. Mary Gojack's papers were probably the beginning of that next wave of papers that did come in. Then when I became so aware of the need and the importance—which was 1992—then all of that was there to start with, and I just went out and started gathering from everybody else, too.

*So that was sort of the seed of the whole idea of the Nevada Women's Archives, which are now on both north and south university campuses.*

It was. Well, there had been women's papers come in even before that, but, yes, that rekindled a flame of interest in this concept of women's papers at the university.

*And going about gathering them in a concerted effort, rather than just when they happened to come in?*

Right, right.

Talking about some people that were colleagues of mine and that I enjoyed working with and developed a good personal relationship with, another person is Bonnie Bryan. We had gotten to know each other casually, I guess, through the political campaign circuits earlier, but when I went to work for Dick to help with his campaign for Governor in 1982, we really got to know each other. She was always around—a very integral part of the campaign, a tremendous asset. I did a variety of things with her.

She had a program that they had learned about from another state, where she would go to senior centers and talk about how important it was for seniors to keep their medicines up-to-date and to not keep all those old medicines in the closet and in the cabinet year after year, and then go back and feel like you could continue to self-diagnose and use those at will. She had a program where we developed brown paper bags printed on the outside with "Bonnie Bryan Brown Bag Prescription Program," or something like that. People were supposed to use this brown bag, go home and bring to the senior center all the old medicines that they had. Then a pharmacist or a physician or both would be there to talk with them about which ones should be tossed and which ones were still good, and just talk with them about proper management of prescription medicine. So she had a variety of pet projects like that, that

were *hers* and that were organized and run independently of the campaign.

When Dick was Attorney General, they had moved to Carson and lived out in Lakeview, and Bonnie was always very willing to make their home available for socials that the women's groups might want to have. We had organized this Nevada Elected Women's Network, and I remember having one big open house at *her* house to welcome the women who came to this special day at the Legislature. So Bonnie and I just really got to know each other and enjoyed each other, and she just is a fabulous person. We continue to keep in touch and will as long as we can.

*So this was really a time of forming some lasting friendships for you?*

Oh, very definitely, very definitely. Another person that was a really key player from the time that I began serving in the Legislature up through the Bryan administration was Andy Grose. Andy had come to the Legislature as a research staff person, I think, during the time I was in the Assembly, and he was just superb. His wife, Jacqui, joined the League of Women Voters, and she was an adult education specialist and actually working on her master's degree part of that time. But they built a home in Carson and settled down, really loved the area, had a couple children that were in school. We just connected, I think, while I was in the Legislature.

When Dick started running for Governor, Andy was a very strong supporter of that. This was a little bit tricky because he was working for the Legislative Counsel Bureau, which is non-partisan and is not appropriate to get involved in partisan political campaigns. The nature of his help would be ghost-writing issue papers and speeches and that type of thing, so he was not at all visible, because he

just couldn't be. But he had developed a really strong relationship with Dick Bryan over the course of the time of Dick's other political activities. And so when Dick was elected, Andy actually became his chief-of-staff. He left the Legislative Counsel Bureau and moved into a very powerful position with Dick Bryan and was superb at anything he did. He was just wonderful. So we enjoyed working with each other as just colleagues in support of Dick Bryan.

When I came to work then in state government, he moved over about that time from chief-of-staff to become Director of Economic Development. This was the new, big department now that had money to go out and recruit industry to the state. He moved out of the Governor's office, and Marlene Lockard took over as chief-of-staff. Andy became a member of the cabinet, just as I was, so he was part of this small group of people that included Larry Struve, Stan Jones, Barbara Weinberg; Gene Paslov, as Superintendent of Education at that point; and a man who represented the chancellor's office in the university, Warren Fox, who was kind of our link to higher education. That team of people just were all close friends—had high respect for each other professionally and was the team that wished we'd been given the go-ahead to lead in a variety of ways that we really wanted to do. Andy Grose was very much a part of that, too. Ultimately, he resigned and is now in San Francisco heading up a west coast arm of a national non-profit policy development center and working closely, I think, with the Western Governors' Association and groups like that. I still get Christmas cards and things like that, but Andy and Jacqui were very close personal friends, and he was just a great asset to state government.





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FINANCIAL STRUGGLE IN BUSINESS

One other thing that is just on a totally different bent . . . we haven't talked much about money, other than that it just was hard going. I can't remember exactly when this was, but there was a real low point when I was juggling these businesses. It was probably in 1984 (or it could have been in 1985) when I realized one day I could not meet my payroll to pay Mary the next time her money was due. We kind of kept track as to what accounts were coming in when, and we had some monthly accounts that came because we were on a sustaining agreement. We had some idea of what we could take in, but I can remember sitting in my little back room and figuring out the realities of cash flow. I made the phone call that borrowed \$5,000 from my life insurance in order to be able to meet the payroll for Mary and some other critical expenditures. Other things could wait, but Mary's paycheck was real important. It really was touch and go, and to this day I have not paid off that loan on the insurance. [laughter] So the insurance is almost \$5,000 short in value. But it sure was

great to have it there at that point in time and be able to get that \$5,000 when I needed it.

*But that tells you what kind of a margin you were running on in trying to run your own business.*

That's right. So, I just began to realize this is not my forté. I love doing all these things, but I need somebody to pay me to do them on a sustaining contract, not one at a time. [laughter]

The Jean Ford Associates partners as included Mary Forrester, Beverly Funk, Kathie Rice, and Correna Caudle-Phillips. Barbara Agonia was there for the first couple of meetings and then really backed out before we'd all contributed money for a certain number of shares of the corporation. There were really the five of us. I was elected the President of the corporation; Correna was Vice President and Treasurer; Mary Forrester was Secretary; and then two Directors were Beverly Funk and Kathie Rice.

We formed in December of 1980, and that was right as I resigned from the library and was getting ready to go into the 1981 session. We dissolved one year later in December of 1981. Now, as to dissolving the business, we made a decision to do that about December of 1981. There are minutes of the corporation down through August of 1982, as we dealt with a *lot* of liquidation of property—some furniture we had on lease and how to handle that.

We had all contributed a certain amount of money at the beginning. It actually was not an *even* amount. Each of us contributed an amount based on what we could afford, and that resulted in a proportionate number of shares in the total. Midway through that year, when we realized that we were really using up our capital, together as a corporation we got a loan from American Bank of Commerce, which was a fairly new bank in Las Vegas at that time. That allowed us to continue to keep going for another six months or eight months. But then we truly decided that we were not going to make it the way we had anticipated, and so we started bringing closure to the group. Everyone agreed to equally be responsible for one-fifth of that loan—whatever the remaining amount was. So as I said earlier, we were able to just close down without going into bankruptcy and just agreed to dissolve the corporation, which we did. I think that's probably all we need there.

Oh, I remembered some of the contracts we had then that came to Mary and me to carry out. We had decided to pull back into my home and operate as the Jean Ford Company. Another thing we had started, which I mentioned earlier, was called "Nevada Welcome", which was like a welcome wagon for businesses. Kathie Rice had been the spearhead of that piece of our business, and we agreed for her to take that and make money

with it if she could. She took that part of the company. Mary and I took the contract for publishing the first *Legislative Almanac* plus a *major* convention that we had a contract with. The rest of it, we just closed down. We were able to bring closure as a group. So that kind of takes care of that.

*So ultimately, it ended fairly smoothly?*

Well, yes. [laughter] There was a lot to it, and there was a lot of tension. I mean, we had basically failed at what we set out to do. [laughter] We had this vision of something we could do, and it only took about a year to find out the realities of the business world. If it wasn't going to work, let's find out quick. We were just so naïve in how we went about it—how we handled the money that we did have. We were more optimistic than realistic, I guess, and really didn't know the tenor of the times and realize the economy was such that it was a really bad time to try to do that.

But we also found out that we really were unwilling to work together as a group and make hard decisions as a group—that in a way, individuals in the group were there because they all kind of wanted to be entrepreneurs and do their own thing, but we really couldn't each do that. We had to work as a team, and we found that we weren't really willing to do that very well. We couldn't make the hard decisions together that would have maybe kept us going. So it was better that we dissolved and go on to other things which is what we did.

*Now you have some information on your personal growth—another one of your personal planning matrixes that you did.*

[laughter] Yes, right. This would have been, I guess, right after that. Here I am—I've

decided not to run for re-election, and now we've started the tour company. Anyway, I found a matrix of personal planning that has quite a bit of detail for 1983 and 1984. It really doesn't have much for 1985, 1986, and 1987, but it does show kind of where I was coming from and some of my goals at that time. This relates to personal, community, professional, and political; those would be the four categories that I was looking at. Maybe we should just follow all of these through each category, that would be the quickest thing.

My fifty-fourth birthday was in 1983. So, personal goals were to pay off my debt for the Jean Ford Associates and fix up my house and fix up the yard. Those were things that *did* happen, and largely, [laughter] I can thank my father for that, because my father died in December of 1983 and left me a \$15,000 C.D. Actually, he gave that to me before he died. He had set up a trust for my brother, but he did want me to have this one gift—the ongoing assets of the property and insurance and everything would go to my brother. So I just went from one bank [laughter] to another bank, and that helped me pay off my piece of the debt, so it was an incredibly wonderful thing. [laughter] A wonderful gift from my dad, so I was able to do that.

In July of 1984, Carla would finish her internship. Carla had graduated from Reed during the 1981 session of the Nevada Legislature. She then had been accepted to Johns Hopkins Medical School, so she had been in Baltimore for four years and would come home occasionally, but was very engrossed in medical school. The summer of 1984 would be when her internship would end, and she was then looking at some kind of residency. First, she looked at staying at Johns Hopkins and taking a residency in surgery, which she did for a year.

*Do you want to say a little bit more about when your father when he passed away? How was that for you?*

Oh, we had kept in pretty close touch, generally by telephone. He was not a strong writer, and so we talked on the phone a lot. He had some ongoing health problems. He had a pacemaker put in to deal with his heart, and then ultimately he was hospitalized. Right around Christmas time, I was called and they said that he wasn't doing well, and so I went to Joplin, Missouri, and was there when he died. I was there probably about a week or eight or nine days altogether, and probably about three or four days before he died.

*Was he in the hospital?*

Yes, he was in the hospital and hooked up to a lot of stuff. But he knew who I was, and we had a good chance to visit and I really, really enjoyed that. My brother was continuing to create problems but was around at that point, too. He wasn't living in the house. So he wasn't actually there in the hospital when my dad died, but he was in town. I think I've talked about this earlier, that we spent Christmas together [laughter] in my father's house. The funeral services were right before Christmas—like on the 23rd—and then I stayed until about the 27th as we tried to wind up affairs.

Carla had come home. That year she actually was on her way to Africa in the spring. She was in medical school, and she was going to spend two or three months in Nigeria working for a surgeon who was an alumnus of Johns Hopkins. She came home and then was going to go from home to New York and fly to Africa. I ended up not being home because of my father's death. I think I finally made it back to Las Vegas before she had to leave for the East Coast.

It was a sad time, in that I wish that I'd gotten to know him better than I really did. He was in his late eighties, and he was not well, and you didn't want to wish him to linger on. Kind of the end of a piece of my life.

I had joined Soroptimists International of Greater Las Vegas. There were about five Soroptimists groups down there then, and this was a really *very* high-energy professional women's service organization. They had been trying to get me to join for a long time, and finally I did. I enjoyed that a lot, but it was a weekly commitment and just very demanding on time. I belonged, I think, for two or three years but then felt I couldn't keep that up. It gave me connections and good friends that I continued with for many, many years.

There were women's networks, and now women-in-business networks were becoming quite the thing, because women were going into business in huge numbers. There was a group called Renaissance Women, a business women's network that met once a month and had *huge* membership and interesting programs. I belonged to that and probably did a workshop for it now and then.

Then I belonged to the American Society for Training and Development, which is a national professional organization for trainers, for people who do basically corporate training, or non-profit organization training, or institutional training. And it's an excellent organization. It has national meetings and regional meetings, and very talented people belong. We had a breakfast meeting, as I recall. Denny's was our monthly meeting place. I was on the board of that for awhile and helped with regional workshops that we would put on and connected with some really outstanding people in Las Vegas that were in the training field professionally—human resource professionals in some of the major hotels and people like that.

Then there was a group called the Metropolitan Research Association. With the Jean Ford Company, we subcontracted and did some work for which we got paid on a publication that they worked on, which was available to the community. So those were my community involvements in 1983.

In 1984 there was a big Soroptimists meeting at South Lake Tahoe in April, and the A.S.T.D. national convention in Dallas and then something called the World Future Society in Washington, D.C. in June. [laughter] I honestly can't remember if I went to that conference or not, but I *loved* the concept of futurism. I belonged to the World Future Society and got their publication quarterly, at least, and *very* much liked connecting with futurists—people who kind of made their living looking at future trends and visioning for the future. That was just a personal interest of mine that I always enjoyed. One thing [I did then was] invest in software, [laughter] the computer end of things which was really at that point moving along. We were all trying to keep up with the kind of equipment—hardware and software—that we needed.

In 1983 I still very much felt connected with the world of politics, even though I was trying to earn a living, which may tell us something about why I had trouble earning a living. [laughter] In 1985 I was on the Tourism Commission. In July my tourism appointment expired. When we were all appointed we drew long and short straws, and I drew one of the short straws for a two-year term, so that they would be staggered. I can't remember whether I was reappointed, but the following month is when I accepted the appointment to move to Carson; that was a moot issue at that point anyway.

In 1986, one of my real thoughts was to run for Lieutenant Governor. The county

and state political party conventions . . . if I was going to try to be actively involved, then I'd need to go to those and play those games—be visible at those conventions and then campaign. [laughter]

*Do you want to talk a little bit about that decision about running for Lieutenant Governor?*

On the political end in 1983, the Nevada Women's Political Caucus chapter in southern Nevada had kind of died out. I had never been a real strong leader, but I was really an individual member and a strong supporter, so I was part of trying to reactivate a Caucus in southern Nevada. They had a big tea at my house, and about fifty people came, and we did reactivate the Caucus. At this point, I was trying to stay out of a leadership role because I needed to earn money at the things I did. I was kind of on the edges, you know, trying to keep these things going—not wanting to play a big role myself, but going to the meetings. That's when I was putting on these workshops on how to run for office, for which I *could* get some money.

[In my journal, in July of 1983 I wrote about] my appointment to the Tourism Commission; and then September, the Caucus political campaign clinic, which I did; and October, the Caucus state convention. Then in 1984, I had county and state conventions. These would be the political party conventions, September primary and November general. I had there Reid, Vucanovich, and state Senate. I may have been thinking to run for the state Senate again in 1984, if I could get other things together.

*What would have been the reference to Barbara Vucanovich?*

I'm not quite sure.

*She would have been in the U.S. Congress then, correct?*

Right. Maybe I was just listing the races that were going, so I'm not quite sure of the significance of that.

*You weren't planning to run for U.S. Congress?*

No. [laughter] OK, I have *never* been interested in going to Washington, D.C. We can just say that emphatically. You know, lots of people when they get involved in politics, immediately their ideal is to be in the halls of the Capitol. I told you how I was utterly awed by the people in the state Senate [laughter] when I first ran for the Assembly. So the idea of being in Washington was really beyond my comprehension, but it *never* interested me. The issues that they deal with in Washington are *not* the issues that I am strongest on—the economic issues, the international trade, all of that kind of thing I just don't have a background on. You can't keep up with everything. A *long* time ago I made a decision to concentrate on Nevada—Nevada issues and Nevada people. Whatever politically I wanted to do would be to do it in Nevada. I did fantasize from time to time of a statewide office in Nevada, but I wouldn't even take it if they *handed* it to me, to go represent Nevada in Washington. The idea of running every two years and spending most of your time on an airplane moving back and forth—that just sounds awful.

*But you still had an interest in getting back into politics if you could earn a living at the same time?*

Yes. That's the only one of the boxes in my list that I consistently put something in, the "Political" box. So I must have been doing it



for that reason. And then “Professional,” and “Community,” and even “Personal,” you know, would fall in place later. [laughter]

*That was still a dream? I mean, you just loved it so much.*

Yes. Right. Right. So then we go to 1985, and the tourism appointment expires. I think I just had those political conventions down as places to be to stay in the swim of things, to be at those county and state conventions and be involved somewhat in the election campaigns, for whatever reasons. Just to keep a foot in the door. Then in 1986 I had listed, “Announce for Lieutenant Governor, the campaign, the county conventions, and the primary and the general.” The races that would be up in the general election would be Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Laxalt’s Senate seat, and U.S. Congress north and south. Then in 1987, I wrote in the political box of my list, “Sworn in—Lieutenant Governor.” In 1983 I was looking ahead at that as a potential.

Now, what happened? [laughter] I don’t know that I ever even shared that with other people, so it never got beyond my own sitting down and thinking that would be something I would enjoy doing; that might be an office I could *win* at the state level. It was part-time, which would enable me to continue to do other things—earn my living other ways. In fact, that would bring in some money. Certainly chairing [laughter] and following in Cashell’s footsteps, I had *my* version of how I would run those commissions, which would be part of the job that the Lieutenant Governor has—the Commission on Economic Development and Tourism.

But in reality, with all the other things that we’ve talked about—the struggle to make a living, not running for re-election, working in Dick’s campaign—it became

apparent that I didn’t fit. I mean, it just wasn’t politically feasible. Well, the *main* thing being financial . . . that I needed to have a personal financial base and a political financial base to run for statewide office. There were just too many other things I had to be dealing with to make that a reality. If that had been the only thing I was going to work on, I could have done it, I’m sure, but there were too many other things I had to do—too many balls I had in the air that I felt I had to keep going at that point in time.

*In your struggles to do a business and to have an income, there didn’t seem to be a way to do that and be in political office. What about the political financial basis? As you went along through these years, would it have been there had you been able to focus on Lieutenant Governor?*

Well, I think so. I think I had *excellent* press most of the time. The times we’ve talked about bad press for me, some of them have been such obvious political potshots. Sure, it hurt me as a businesswoman, but it didn’t hurt me politically. I mean, they’re a lot like that old saying, “Just spell my name right.” [laughter] As long as your name is spelled right, it’ll help, you know. So I had a good reputation. I was popular, and political support would have been there at the polls. I had a broad base. I was electable. Let’s say that I felt I had a broad base of public support.

Now, getting the Democratic Party to make me *their* pick to be the nominee for Lieutenant Governor would be another cup of tea. This would be Dick Bryan’s re-election year, and we’re looking at the 1986 election, so this would have been running as his Lieutenant Governor as he served his second term. As it turns out, the talk was already happening that if Dick Bryan were elected

Governor in 1986, he would run for the U.S. Senate in 1988. These columnists looked down the line, and politicians looked down the line, and they see these tracks as things are happening. People could already see, what does one do after they've been Governor? Well, they start looking at those options. So as it turns out, that year the race for Lieutenant Governor was the critical race, because whoever got to be Lieutenant Governor, it was felt, would be Governor in 1988 assuming Bryan won the U.S. Senate seat. That's when Bob Miller ran for Lieutenant Governor.

Now, I can't remember exactly when all that began to fall into place, but I did not go out and work the party to get support for my running. I didn't have time, for one thing, and I began to see that I would never win the party's support. I mean, this was now *big-time* politics. In other words, just to get the Lieutenant Governor's slot in 1986 is not where it's really at. Whoever the Democrats nominate in 1986, they want to win because they can't afford to let Dick Bryan run for the U.S. Senate and let a Republican take over as Governor in 1988.

*So they knew they were actually electing two Governors, Dick Bryan and whoever was Lieutenant Governor that could move up?*

That's right. That's right. And so that became a huge race that year. The Lieutenant Governor's race was the biggest race on the ballot. All that began to play out months ahead, and I began just to see I didn't have the time, the energy, or maybe the political will to go fight that fight. And probably I was being realistic in saying, you know, I don't fit in with that crowd. I didn't want it that bad, to drop everything and try to make that work. So that had been a dream earlier, but that's the way things happen. You look ahead

and then really timing is everything on a lot of these political options, the higher you go. Whenever incumbents are going to run for re-election or whenever they're going to retire, one maneuvers in order to be in the right place at the right time so that they can have a shot at another office. I toyed with it, and it wasn't that high a priority for me to give it everything I had.

*OK. At some point, do you think that was your ultimate political goal, to serve at that level in Nevada; or do you think you ever had such a goal?*

No, I don't think I ever did. I *loved* being in the Legislature, except for the frustration of my speech problems on the floor which *really* hampered me from being effective. And I would toy with the idea of being Governor just because I—as a person who likes administration and organization—could see things that, if I were Governor, that I thought I could do to really organize state government in a better way or provide leadership. But to have an overriding goal to be there, to *be* the Governor, no—I did not have that political ambition. It was more an ambition to do the job, to do the work that was involved, not to hold the office.

*And so that's where the reality always took over? You just kind of watched each race and said, "Can I fit in here, into the work?"*

Right, and the idea being if you're going to run for office, getting a four-year term is definitely advantageous over a two-year term. The idea of running in a statewide campaign, that didn't bother me at all. By now I knew people all over the state. But the realism of earning a living had an awful lot to do with it. Then the other would be that a Bryan-Ford

ticket . . . that was in a way, too much of the same thing. I mean, we were so alike that he almost needed a different kind of person. Perhaps he needed more of a conservative businessman-type person, or whatever. As it turned out, Bob Miller emerged as the winner, but there were a lot of other people in that Lieutenant Governor's race that year.

I don't think I ever approached Dick Bryan with this idea, but I think he probably would have *not* thought it was a good idea, [laughter] just because you need to look at those kinds of things when you're up there in statewide politics. And I think I began to realize that myself—that this was not in the right place at the right time. So anyway, that's one of those dreams that didn't happen.

*Yes. But this was still where your dreams were, because what you really loved was the political arena?*

Right. Right. Well, yes! Or what I loved was public service. I had gotten good at the political end of it, but I had already learned that there were other ways that you could be involved in public service.

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## DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

All of this got drastically changed in 1985 when Dick called and I moved to Carson. Then I began to see what it was like to be in public service in a totally different role. It was in August, and Governor Bryan called and said, “Would you be willing to consider moving to Carson? I’d like you to consider an appointment.”

And I said, “Well, what do you have in mind?”

He wanted to appoint me to be the Director of the Office of Community Services, and I basically did not know much about that at all. He told me that it was an office that managed a lot of federal money, and at the present time Linda Ryan had been the Director of it, and she had just been moved from that position to Director of Welfare. This office had grown by leaps and bounds, since it was about three people when she first started. The beginning of it was the War on Poverty—the Office of Economic Opportunity at the state level—and it was totally financed by federal money. She was in the right place at the right time to take on a lot of other

federal programs that started coming our way as Congress started trying to decentralize things and put a lot more money out in the States. She capitalized on that and gathered those programs like a Christmas tree. And so by 1985 there were nine major programs within this agency—almost none of which I’d had anything to do with; I basically was not involved in that aspect of state government.

I said, “Yes, I think I’d be interested in learning more about it.” Well, Linda came down and we went to lunch, and she told me about the agency and what had been going on in it and gave me a pep talk kind of thing. Within a week, I had decided. I talked to Mary Forrester and Maxine and basically decided this was an offer I couldn’t refuse; that it was a chance to really do something worthwhile; that we *weren’t* making it successfully with our business. It was just a really struggle to keep going the way we were going, and so I thought it was a good move for me to make, and they both agreed. And so I said yes, but that I would need a couple of months to wind up my affairs down there. We agreed that I would go to work as of October 1.

*So you had a couple of businesses to close, and you were moving from Las Vegas? Was that going to be a permanent move at that point?*

Not necessarily. I didn't know. Now, one of the things that we did was the contract I had with the Sierra Club to develop support for wilderness. In June of 1985 I had organized the big flyover of all the wilderness areas. The Governor called me in August. That's *one* of the programs I had to turn over to someone else. I had created Friends of Nevada Wilderness, and so I got Geneva Douglas (who was then active in Soroptimists International and had gotten her club to join Friends of Nevada Wilderness) and Lois Sagel and some others in that club, and then others in the Sierra Club. I got them to basically take over. I was the kind of the Executive Director, and so we got Geneva to take over being Executive Director and Chair at the same time. So that's one of the things I had to do.

There were several contracts that we had that we felt Mary could continue through a period of time. So the plan was that she would continue to operate the Jean Ford Company out of my house probably for six months in order to kind of bring closure to things. We probably had a convention—not a major one, but we had business on the books. And then these consulting contracts, I had to deal with each one and bring a positive closure to it.

The tour company: Maxine had decided that she really maybe wanted to go back to school and get a degree. I don't think she had ever gotten a college degree, and the idea of going back and getting a degree in accounting really appealed to her. And we've talked about the reasons why the tour company was a struggle. It was at the height of its popularity, but we just didn't have the capital to sustain it in that manner while we made it work and sold business for the future. So anyway, we

did all the things that we needed to do to try to bring closure.

In the meantime, my daughter, Janet, had gotten married. This was about in January of 1985, I believe. She was dancing at the MGM, and she had met a really neat guy named Joe Farroh. He worked in various jobs on the Strip as a *maitre d'* or as a waiter in gourmet restaurants and that type of thing. They really connected and ultimately got married like on New Year's Day at the little chapel down by the Hacienda Hotel—the Little Church in the West, or whatever they call that down there—and with a reception afterwards at the Port Tack restaurant in town. She had bought a house earlier in the west part of town. They moved into her house, and they both continued to work in their jobs on the Strip.

The reason this was triggered in my memory is that when I moved to Carson, Joe came with me. We got a U-Haul—just a small one—and brought the things that I felt I needed to function. [laughter] It was a lot of files, but it was enough that we couldn't put it in the back of a station wagon, so we rented this U-Haul, and the two of us loaded it and drove up here together to Carson. I had been able to connect with someone who was leaving for the winter and wanted someone to house-sit for her. Her name was Virginia Stout. She was retired and she liked to travel all over the world. She had plans to be gone for about eight months, and I moved into her house over on Adeline Drive in Carson. (It was just about half a block from Esther and Earl Nicholson's house, the one that I had lived in when I came up in 1971 and worked the legislative session.) That was just really a fabulous thing, because I didn't have to worry about making a home right away. I could just move into her house. She had lived all over the world and worked all over the world. It was like a little museum, and it was very



comfortable, so I just needed personal things. But I had a *lot* of things related to the office that I brought.

So I came and I went to work October 1, 1985. I continued to live in her house until the following May, and then I decided I wanted to buy a house in Carson. So in the spring I started looking for a house and ended up deciding on the house that I now live in, which was kind of a zero lot-line condo-type arrangement—small house about 1200 square feet—but I really love the layout and the location at the north end of Carson City. I ended up moving into this house in July of 1986. I bought it from people who were living in it.

Between May and July I stayed with my brother-in-law, Oscar Ford, and his wife, Frieda, at their home in Carson. My mother-in-law, Prudence, had moved to Carson City not too long before that—maybe a year to two years. I don't know if that coincided with when my ex-husband moved from Boulder City to the island of Molokai, but I think maybe it did—that she did not have either of her sons in southern Nevada. Although she and I had reconnected and did many things together, it was to her advantage, and Ozzie wanted her to be here where he could look after her. So she moved up and lived in her own apartment here in Carson. She was just absolutely delighted when I told her I was moving to Carson. We did a lot of things together until she died in her early nineties, and she was *very* active at that time. She didn't drive but she just was very much a self-starter, and she would play the piano at the senior citizens' center at lunch time. She had lots of friends that she'd go have lunch or dinner with, and she liked to paint and took art classes and met all the people at the art supply store and just lived a very, very active life and did a lot of things with Ozzie and his

family. And then when my kids would come home, we'd do things with her. So that was always fun.

*So you really already had family connections in Carson City.*

Right. Oh, yes. In fact, I left Janet and her husband in Las Vegas. But by this time that particular year, Carla had gone to India. (And this is kind of jumping around and talk about where everybody is, I guess.) Well, after Carla graduated from Hopkins, she did one year of internship and a year of residency as a surgeon and really just did not like that at all. She just began to feel really closed in and realizing that life as a surgeon didn't allow for much of a personal life. It was really going to be difficult to marry, have children, have any balance, where other kinds of medicine you can take on more of a part-time basis. Surgery, you need to kind of keep your hand in it all the time, and she could just see that was going to be really difficult to do. And they were really leaning on her at Hopkins in a very demanding way; it was not just her—that was the style. She had *loved* medical school there, and there had been quite a support system at the medical school for the students. They really wanted the students to do well and finish, and they all did. When she graduated at Hopkins, Sam, Janet and I—all three of us—went to that graduation in Baltimore and had a fabulous time together. We were just so proud of her. That was a big event that happened here in the early eighties.

She decided toward the end of the first year of surgery that she just wasn't going to do it, and so she gave her notice to leave at the end of that year to find another path in medicine. She interviewed a couple of places, and she decided maybe some sub-specialty of surgery would be easier than just general

surgery. So she ended up meeting with a doctor in Worcester, Massachusetts, who had an opening for a resident in urology, and she was interviewed. They both agreed that she would come there and start a residency in urology, but she had to wait a year because she was out of sync with the training programs. He asked her what she was going to do during that year, and she said she didn't know. One thing she had toyed with was getting a master's in public health; that interested her. So she thought she might explore that, but she didn't know what she would do. And so he said, "Would you be interested in going to India?"

He was Indian and could arrange a job for her in a hospital working with the chief of surgery in southern India. In fact, he had gone to school there. They would give her a stipend—like \$10,000 for the year—to go there and work. And so she said, "That sounds fabulous." She'd had this really very positive experience in Africa doing work during medical school. So they had made this agreement, and she went to India. That would have been about the same time I came to Carson, like the fall of 1985, because she came back in the spring of 1986, and she came up to Carson then to visit me.

I took time off, and Janet took time off, and the three of us traveled to Massachusetts together. We helped Carla buy a car and find an apartment and got her settled into what was now going to be this new life of hers, which was a residency in urology in this hospital in Worcester— University Medical Center, I think it was called. Well, we did that. But she realized within a month of being there that this was a very bad decision. There had been some real misunderstanding, in that the guy who interviewed her and wanted her to come mistook her reason for wanting to leave Hopkins as being that she didn't feel challenged enough. [laughter] It was, in fact,

the other way around—that she wanted to be less challenged. She wanted to do something that was a *little* bit easier in terms of being able to look ahead at some balance in her life. Right away, he had her doing kidney transplants with him, spending eight or ten hours in an operating room, and then he would go home and leave the after-care to her. All of a sudden, she just could see no light at the end of the tunnel, and this was the beginning of a five-year program. She just was, within a month or two, really devastated psychologically. She realized she had made a big error—here, she had just quit another program the year before, and now she had gotten herself into one that she also wanted to reject. So, you know, where did she fit? It was really one of those things, and she was *very* low emotionally and mentally and just really didn't know what to do.

Fortunately, there was some good professional help and people on the staff who saw her strengths and her skills. This guy who was her chief was just a hard driver and really started putting her down and criticizing her ability to be a doctor and this type of thing, which caused her to then spiral even more into lack of confidence. People back there together all agreed that she should get *out* of that relationship that she had with the chief and the urology residency; that this wasn't going to work. It wasn't what she wanted, and he was not happy with the way she was doing it.

By Christmas time, I think, she had basically given notice that she would finish the year, but then that was it. They got her transferred into the other hospital in town, where she didn't have to work personally under this one doctor, and she did finish out the year. During that year, the medical chief in that hospital took notice of her and ultimately asked if she would be interested

in switching over to internal medicine and completing a residency at that hospital with them, and that is what she ultimately did. That summer she switched programs and then was in an internal medicine program, which was very satisfying and very positive, and she did finish that.

Carla was living in the Worcester area and had roommates who sometimes were connected with the medical field, and sometimes they weren't. She was dating guys in that area when she had the time (this was a really very demanding life) and coming home when she could. She more often than not drew Christmas and New Year's [laughter] as days to work, so she was getting home now and then. Of course, I was up in Carson City now and she really had a strong connection with her grandmother, and so she loved coming to Carson. She got reacquainted or more acquainted with her cousins whom we hadn't been with for a number of years. In fact, one of her cousins, Rebecca Ford, ended up working in Boston as a C.P.A., and they became *very* close friends that year and were kind of a support system to each other. So this is what was happening to Carla.

Janet was busy with her career in Las Vegas, but within about a year of her getting married, in the spring that I was still house-sitting in my first year on the job, she began to realize that her husband had a cocaine habit, which wasn't something that she really knew about when they got married. When he started dipping into her bank account, then she just really had to face reality about that, and this was a really difficult time for her. She filed for divorce. Meanwhile, I was in Carson starting a whole new life, and so it was a difficult time for her; but it was just something that she felt she had to do. We connected when we could, and hopefully I was of some support to her at that point in time.

I really was very excited about coming up to Carson City. I really looked forward to it. I was up once, I think in September, before I actually moved up with the U-Haul and met with the staff (or some of the people, anyway) and then took over as of October 1. I remained in that position until March of 1989. So from October of 1985 until March of 1989, I was Director of the Governor's Office of Community Services.

*And how many staff did you have at that point? Do you remember?*

Actually, I don't. [laughter] The agency had about nine programs at the time that I took over, and I think there were about forty people in the agency altogether, including clerical and professional people and middle managers. It was divided into about five major divisions, and each one had a middle manager that was the head of that program.

I had the opportunity to appoint my own Deputy Director. I was the Director. I was unclassified, meaning that I could be appointed by the Governor. There were no specific requirements in my case. I didn't have to have background training in a particular area, as there are in some statewide appointed positions, but then I became an unclassified personnel at a certain grade level, et cetera. The Deputy Director was also an unclassified position, and in instances like this, the Director has the option of picking her own Deputy Director, which I did within the next few months. I interviewed a number of people for that position, two of whom were outstanding. One was Susan Paslov, who was the wife of the State Superintendent of Education and who had some training in law. They hadn't been in town too long, I don't think. The other finalist was Janie Young, who had been a personal friend that I had known

through the League many years earlier. We had kept in touch. She had gone on some of the tours that my tour company had led. She loved traveling into rural Nevada. She was, at that point in time, editing a small monthly magazine or one of those “Here’s What’s Going on in Reno” kind of things. Don Thompson sold the ads, and she edited the publication. It was owned by some business person in the Bay Area, and the two of them were putting out this little magazine in Reno. She was living in Reno, and I ended up deciding to hire Janie in that position within a few weeks. Actually, I was torn, because Susan, I felt, would be excellent as well.

In that particular position you really needed someone you could personally connect with. They needed to have some ability to help organize people and all of that, but the main things are that the Director had to be comfortable with them and that they could help the Director do the job. I remember calling Jim Roberts, who at that time was still teaching in political science, public administration at the university (he and his wife, Ann, had been good friends of mine.) and saying, “I have no clue. How do I decide who should be my Deputy Director? What’s important. What do I look for?”

This was a whole new world to me, and he was great. He just really gave me some good advice without talking about the actual candidates. Just saying, “Well, here’s what you need to look at for *you*, and then whichever one fits the bill best, go with it.”

*And what was some of that advice that you went by?*

Well, one of the most important things was that this person be loyal to me; that it be someone I felt I could trust and who would be supportive of me in trying to carry out my job.

Then *whatever* they did, the two of us could work out as a team and I would certainly then build on their strengths and give them the job that they could help do.

*Perhaps it seems apparent, but why was that such a key, and why did he make that recommendation for loyalty?*

Well, because it is true. I mean a Deputy Director is there to be the Director when you are not there; is there to help the Director see that the goals and the mission of the department are carried out. They also are unclassified, so you don’t have to draw from a list within the personnel system of people you don’t know.

*Yes. Does it have anything to do with the political kinds of things that go on in state government, that you needed to have a loyal helper?*

Well, yes, in that I was on the Governor’s cabinet. I answered to the Governor directly. My Deputy needed to recognize that, and when I needed to respond to the Governor, she needed to be ready to do that, too.

So anyway, I chose Janie. She was great. I was never sorry. I mean, she was just a wonderful person to have and a great support to me as we went through some difficult times. We carved out some roles for her that used her strengths and helped me do my job. It was a great experience having her there and getting to know her better, and we became very close friends. After I left state government, she stayed on. She was able to transfer to the state Job Training Office and became a grants analyst and ultimately retired from state government, so it was a positive experience for her and gave her the opportunity to have state retirement.

But we also found a position for Susan, [laughter] which was really fortunate, because I just liked her a lot. Her legal training just made her the perfect person for us to hire under contract a few months later, when one of my programs needed to hire somebody to negotiate settlement of some issues between the state government, the Fallon Naval Air Station, and ranchers and other property owners in the area. This was all over the issue of the planes flying over private property and their special mission in training out there in Dixie Valley and the surrounding area. The management of the state's relationship to the federal government on this issue was under my purview in my agency, so we hired Susan to be a special negotiator in that program, and she was with us for over a year and did an excellent job. So that worked out well.

Well, what was the Office of Community Services? Almost all the programs were federal money coming into the state. Some of them brought grants, like the Community Services Block Grant and the Community Development Block Grant. A number of programs related to funds from the U.S. Department of Energy. One had to do with weatherization. All of these involved working with low-income areas, blighted areas of communities, low-income people, sometimes predominantly in rural Nevada. Each program had a different set of federal rules. Low-income Home Energy Assistance—this was a program where people could apply for help with their heating bills. An Institutional Conservation Project, which was helping build hospitals or weatherize hospitals to make them more efficient, and we had federal grants to do that.

We had a lot of money resulting from some legal issues that had been at the federal level that resulted in a big court case against all the large oil companies. They were having

to pay huge amounts of money as fines into this one pot that then was coming out to the states and had to be used for energy-related projects. We managed all of that.

Then, on top of that, we had the state Planning Office, which had been in the Governor's office through, I guess, the List administration. When all the big federal money for planning ran out, then the state had to put up money. We had started something called a state Clearing House. Certain kinds of major actions in the state had to be run through this clearing house so that coordination could take place. The state Planning Office was in charge of that, and it was funded *now* with state money. Everything else I have described was funded with federal money.

We added five programs while I was there. One was called Procurement Outreach, where we set up a program to help people in the state get government contracts for business. We hired two men who were real experts in this field, who had been in the military and who knew the world of government contracts. They set up a whole program of helping businesses in Nevada connect with government contracts in Nevada.

The U.S. Navy memorandum with the state regarding the Fallon supersonic training . . . that had many facets to it, and basically the state Planning Office managed that, and that is where Susan Paslov worked. The Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Homeless Grant of 1987—this was when “homeless” became a reality around the country. Various urban areas were trying to decide what to do about the homeless, and H.U.D. gave a considerable amount of federal money for some time. That was given to my agency to manage for the state of Nevada. This was a brand new program, and then there were community food and nutrition grants that came along for



the homeless. Homeless money was more for shelters, and then this other would be for the food and assistance that went with it. So any of these one-shot federal programs, they would look to my agency to do, because that had been its history—taking these programs on.

Well, so we had all of these programs to manage and administer. For the most part they served rural Nevada more than Las Vegas and Reno, and they each had their own set of rules. There was extensive oversight required when we would give out grants. Then we would have to go monitor how the recipients were handling the money. There was lots of travel by staff involved, both in setting up the programs in the rural areas and then going back and delivering on them or watching to see that the money was spent properly. So it was just an *incredibly* complex administrative world that I moved into—the whole world of federal bureaucracy and state bureaucracy together dictating how you operated.

*Lots of rules, red tape. This would be an organizational challenge even for a very organized person like yourself.*

Absolutely. And it was a challenge to make it run effectively. *How* it was organized was pretty much dictated by the law, so it was reading a lot of fine print and getting to know the staff. Some of them had been there since the inception of the agency.

*So you had some people on board who knew particular programs?*

Obviously. So my job was to get oriented and then see what the Director did in all of this, and I really looked forward to that kind of challenge. Well, I found really quickly what bureaucracy was all about. I had a *very* complex set of rules and regulations by which

the agency was supposed to operate, and I had an organizational chart of people that I had to get to know, and the various roles that they played. I set about doing that, and then I had to really get to know what it meant to work directly for the Governor. When the Governor calls, you drop everything else and you respond to whatever that particular need is.

My agency was real popular with the Governor's office in that it brought good news to people. It wasn't so much a regulatory agency as it was a *helping* agency. Now the way we helped was regulated by the law and administrative rules, but we were basically giving money to people who needed help—to communities, individuals. So we were called upon often to travel with the Governor as he made his rounds to various parts of the state. Dick Bryan had a very successful "Capital for a Day" program where he would fly out with certain staff to Ely for the day or to Elko and hold forth in the local city council chambers and report to the local community on programs that were going on. He would take with him agency heads that dealt with issues in their community. Well, *very* often I or one of my staff went with him on those trips, because we always were bringing good news. We had money. I did a lot of traveling with him.

I found that it was *really*, really hard [laughter] to learn how to manage effectively. At the end of four years, when I decided for a variety of reasons that it was time to leave state government, I decided that managing a whole bunch of people like that to carry out that kind of thing was not my strength.

*Why is that?*

It's hard to answer that. [laughter] Part of it was that I didn't have the freedom in

that position to move the way I wanted to move—so much of it was already structured that I couldn't bend. I couldn't make it bend. In reality, what I found was a very difficult set of middle managers that were already in place, each of whom had his or her own turf and their own agendas and resented the Director, whoever it might be. It was really a difficult group of people that I found I had to work with. They were competent, for the most part, but some of them were really tied into the bureaucratic mind of "do the least amount you can get away with." They did not really have a vision of carrying out the agency role the way I did, and they totally kept me from connecting with the staff under them. The organizational system was such that it was inappropriate—I couldn't go around them.

I needed to work through these managers. I came fully anticipating that we would have a very positive relationship. I mean, I just was very optimistic that I would know how to do this well. I was really very quickly struck by how hard it was, and I was not doing it well. I was having real difficulty getting my staff to communicate with each other and with me. I had so many diverse programs operating under so many rules and regs. I learned very quickly that it was a very difficult job to do—to try to bring all these wide variety of programs together under a cohesive team.

*In retrospect, do you think that's a typical kind of situation for a government entity, where it is difficult to come in when you have middle managers already in place, where they have one idea and you have another?*

Oh, I think that's life. I think that's the real world, more often than not. [laughter] That's not just government. That's in the corporate world. That's in any organization. You have hierarchies. You have different levels. And

you know, all this theory that I had studied in working on my master's, in organizational theory and how bureaucracies work and all that . . . wow! I mean it *all* was just being laid out for me in real life.

*It was exactly the way you had studied it?*

Well, yes. I could see all these patterns that were there and these stereotypical types of people that will be in any work place. How do you go about trying to motivate them and get them to go in a certain direction? The whole thing. Within a few months I just realized I was really in the challenge of my life, administratively.

Why did I have trouble? Part of the reason was that I did not come up through the ranks, and this is true of many unclassified staff. The nature of that is the Governor can bring somebody in from the outside that didn't come up through the ranks and that can be an advantage. But there is that whole psychological business that you are an outsider.

*You didn't pay your dues?*

Right. And then, of course, I was an ex-legislator, which raised other kinds of questions. "She's a politician, you know. She was in the Legislature." Some of them knew me from when I had been in the Legislature. So I was wearing many hats.

Very early on I found out that the agency was in deep trouble in terms of its relationship with the federal government through the audits that had taken place in the years prior to my coming. In fact, the federal government was saying that we owed over a million dollars for improper use of funds. All of this had been playing out in audits for about three years prior to my coming. So all of a sudden I find

myself in the middle of just a *huge* problem, and I spent as much or more of my time trying to deal with that particular issue as I did trying to run the agency for the entire time that I was there.

It was *not* a case of the former Director misappropriating money or of personal malfeasance in any way at all. It *was* a case where, when the agency started and she started developing it, this was the beginning of the block grants program around the country, and the whole philosophy was a minimum amount of red tape: "Let's give these blocks of money to the states and see what they'll do with them to help solve state problems, and we *won't* put a lot of rules and regulations on them." It was in that climate that she first started with that agency.

Well, what happened is that within a couple of years, the oversight that was coming from Congress in Washington was saying, "We don't like what we see being done with this money at the state levels. Far too much money is being put in administration. Not enough is getting to the people who need it." So they started adding more rules and regulations. For instance, for a particular block grant, Congress said only five percent of it could be used for administration; and for another one only ten percent could be used; and for some of the grants, you had to have a certain kind of dollar match from the state. So each of these programs—each *one* of these—had a different set of requirements as to how much of their money could be spent for administration and travel and things like that.

The Director of the agency had basically thumbed her nose at all that and said, "Tough. These are block grants. The original plan was that we were to have flexibility to deliver this and I'm going to ignore it. I've got my own interpretation of these rules." And so, she did.

What had happened is that she had built an agency that was delivering good service, but it was illegally doing so. It was putting far more money into administrative staffing than the regulations allowed, starting in about 1982-1983. So as the audits came in, they would say about the various programs, "You improperly spent this money, so you owe it back to the federal government." And altogether, it was over a million dollars.

*What was your approach to trying to unravel and solve this problem?*

[laughter] Well, I mean, this was a whole new world to me. I didn't come up through the world of finance. I set about trying to understand it all, working with my staff, each program manager, the accountants. We had a large accounting staff that was dealing with all this, and we just had to work program by program. In some of them it was poor accounting, poor reporting, poor paperwork. The proper paperwork hadn't been put together that justified what had been done; the money had not been improperly spent, but there wasn't a paper trail to show you that. And so it meant going back and insisting that the paper trails be put together. When we did that and we could show the feds, then they would agree that we really didn't owe the money. It would be resolved.

Over the four years, I was able to get over \$700,000 resolved, but it took almost all my time and the time of much of my staff. We ended up having to pay money to hire a consultant. What we needed was something called a cost allocation plan with indirect rates for administration. It was a nightmare to build our budget—to take an accounting staff where a piece of it was paid by this program and a piece of it was paid by this other program,

pull it all together into one budget, and then administer it. I mean it was a real nightmare!

That's what I found. [laughter] Just this *total* administrative nightmare to do it right, and some real bottlenecks in people on the staff who did not want to make it work and who became real barriers to developing a team. Now, at the same time there were wonderful people on the staff too. There were some really good times and some excellent services being delivered, but the whole overriding administration of it was just a real nightmare.

OK, so the *major* issue was bringing this agency into compliance. That was my major task. The other was, of course, to keep seeing that the services were being delivered, and for the most part, we did that in a good manner.

We added new programs. One that was an absolute pet of mine was the Governor's Office of Volunteerism. I learned about some federal grants—a new program that was being offered by the ACTION office. They had these ACTION grants that they would make to various states. In the fall of 1986 they offered competitive grants to states to set up offices of volunteerism, and this was a kind of a proposal from the federal government. Well, you can imagine how I felt about *that*. And so we applied for one of those grants to set up the Governor's Office of Volunteerism in Nevada. The Governor's office, for some reason, was *really* reluctant to support it, but he finally did sign off on the proposal, and then we got the grant. Of course, part of it is that these grants weren't going to go on forever—sooner or later you have to put your own money into it or the thing would die. Most of the programs that we had were around as long as I was there, but they did have to be re-authorized by Congress. While I was there, it was more a change in the rules and regulations about how they were administered. But there was talk of some of the programs ending as well.

*But this one on volunteerism was one that eventually had to have some state money with it?*

Right. That was clearly a kind of a seed-money type of thing. You would get money for one year, and then at the end of that year (I think it was just a one-year grant), you had to show some chance that you could keep the program going after that. I remember really leaning on the Governor to support this proposal and being really surprised that he would not enthusiastically endorse it, because even politically it was a great idea for the Governor's office to support the idea of volunteerism—seeing that volunteerism flourished in the state as a way of building community, et cetera.

We did get the grant, and I gave a lot of my energy to that, as well. That was the fun part, developing that program. We were able to hire staff for that year, and we hired Bobbie Gang to come in and be the Director of that program, and she is just a very talented person—multi skills. She was living in Incline Village and had actually run for and served on the Incline Village Board of Trustees, and was active and had lived in Las Vegas for years and years before that. That's where we knew each other, when she was active in Junior League and came out of the world of volunteerism as I had. She was perfect for the job. We created a Governor's Advisory Board on Volunteerism, which Geneva Douglas served on, this woman that I had gotten into Friends of Nevada Wilderness as well. She and Sorooptimists were very supportive, and we got United Way executives from both the north and the south on this advisory board. Ultimately, we were looking at a way of building and strengthening the volunteer world all over the state. We had just an *incredible* group of people on this advisory board.

We did a state conference on volunteerism in Las Vegas that was *very, very* successful. I can't remember if we could also apply for another grant, but it would be less the second year and we needed to start giving it some state support as well. The Governor's office refused to support this program, and to this day, I do not know why. It just was beyond me why, even for political reasons if nothing else. We had built so much good will with this program for the Governor and his office. But the next time budget-making came around, there was just no support for putting any state money into this program and ultimately, it had about a two-year life and then died.

Actually, United Way, both north and south, volunteered to contribute something toward the functioning, but they weren't willing to do that without the state doing *something*. If you're going to call it the Governor's Office of Volunteerism, the Governor's office has to be putting something into it, but they—Governor Bryan, his staff and the Budget office—absolutely refused. The program basically ended, and it was really sad because we had built great bridges to the whole non-profit world, and this program was just *very* successful.

*What kinds of things were accomplished during that two years from this? You mentioned some of its successes. Can you give an example?*

Well, we set up a lot of training for non-profit agencies. We built a resource library on how to successfully run volunteer programs. We brought in outside speakers and trainers that were just fabulous. We tried to work on the idea of building volunteers into state government. We did an inventory on the extent to which volunteers were helping in state government at that point in time. There were significant agencies in state government

that were using volunteers, so we tried to offer them services to strengthen those programs and offer technical services to agencies that *wanted* to create volunteer programs. But we had to have a certain amount of staff and money in order to do that. We just made an incredible amount of good connections all over the state around the whole issue of the volunteer sector playing a significant role in helping government deliver service.

*Has this idea ever been picked up since then? It doesn't exist now?*

No.

*Is it an idea that you think still could be successful?*

Oh, absolutely. Some states and local governments had just created *phenomenal* programs with it. I just haven't followed it in Nevada in recent years. Volunteerism is a very broad topic, but all these boards and commissions that people serve on at the local government level are volunteers. They are an important part of government. Many pieces of government service could be delivered with the help of volunteers which has several advantages: it reduces the cost of delivering service; it makes people feel connected with their government; it helps them see the realities of what it costs to deliver service—just a *lot* of advantages.

Now it costs money to do that—not as much as it would to hire comparable staff to *pay* them to do all this, but it does cost to have good trainers, to have good administrators. You need to reward these people appropriately, which is certificates or thank-you parties or giving them special attention. There's just a whole world of how you deal with volunteers that somebody needs to be there to do.



*Right. And I guess I am asking that question because it seems more and more like there is not money for services in a number of different levels of government.*

That's right. To me, it just could be very cost-effective. A small amount of money could just go a long way in producing good will, enhancing service, connecting people within and without government.

So, anyway, I felt very strongly about it. I was *very* disappointed in the attitude of the Governor's office. But toward the end of the time I was there, Dick Bryan did run for the U.S. Senate, and he did win. Bob Miller was Lieutenant Governor and took over, so that in the fall of 1988 after Dick won the U.S. Senate, the whole budget process was now being carried out to get ready for the Legislature. This was my *second* time to go through the budget process, and by this time, I had a handle on what were the problems within the agency that we had. By this time, the federal government was really breathing down our necks and saying, "Pay up on this money that you truly owe us because you have not used it properly." Even though I had gotten it worked down to less than \$400,000, in preparing my budget for the 1989-1991 biennium, which we started working on in July of 1988, I still needed some state revenue to operate the agency as a whole. The real crunch comes between the time the election ends in November and the Legislature meets in January.

Well, in this particular year, the Governor won the U.S. Senate race. It was now the Lieutenant Governor's budget, but the Governor had not given him an opportunity to be involved in that budget-making process hardly at all. So here was poor Bob Miller stepping into a world he knew nothing about, and the staff at the budget office were

just gods; I mean, they were very powerful people. This particular year Bob Miller ended up bringing Judy Matteucci back. She had started in the legislative budget office and then moved over to work for Bill Bible when he was head of the budget office. Then she left and went to Washington. Bill Bible left to go over to Gaming, and Bob Miller brought her back from Washington to head up the budget office. He had to have somebody who knew what they were doing, and he had to have them really quick, and he had to lean on them extensively to get a budget ready for the 1989 session.

In developing my budget for that biennium, I started meeting with the budget office in the summer of 1988, and then the fall. I started meeting with individual legislators who were on the money committees, because my department could not legally function without some state money for the future. It was just *very* clear that we had to have a state appropriation in the next biennium to continue to function at the level of delivery of services we were doing. But no one wanted to give us any money, to put us in that budget with state money. They would say, "Linda Ryan said when that agency was set up, it would *never* need any state money."

Now, that didn't take into account all the new programs that had been added since then, including state planning, which the feds paid *nothing* for at that point in time. And all these rules and regulations that now said, "You can't spend federal money for administration; you have to be putting state money into the program." If you put all of that together, we could not function without at least \$300,000 or \$400,000 in state money to be the right kind of administrative match to keep all these programs flowing.

*Plus, there was money owed to the federal government. So you not only needed money to function, but in addition you needed money to pay back the federal government?*

Well, I felt if we could show them that we now were going to operate legally from this point forward, and that we did hire this consultant and we did develop a cost allocation plan—how we were going to divide up all the administration from these various programs with indirect rates of administration and everything—that they would forgive the amount that was left, because we had just done this incredible job. We had tightened up; we had cut down our office space by 1800 square feet. We had reduced expenses everywhere I could, in a *major* way, to show good faith that we could do it with less. We had moved twice within this whole time period. We had refigured what we needed by 1800 square feet [laughter] in order to save that amount of money, because the lease was going up. We had reduced some personnel. However, in some instances, Personnel Administration had created upgrades in positions, which were going to cost us more. But we had done all of these things we could to reduce administrative costs. I didn't know what the feds would do, but I wasn't asking for that money. I knew the state would refuse to pay it.

*Right, right. You were just asking for what you needed to keep operating and to meet the federal guidelines.*

That's right. What we needed at this point in time to be legal and continue to deliver our service.

*And there was no support for that?*

And there was *no* support for that *anywhere*. I mean, first in the budget office,

because you don't get to the Governor's office until around Christmas time. You know, we worked continually with the budget office. They had certain analysts that were assigned to our programs from the budget office, so year-round they knew what was going on with us. In August we developed a budget at the current service level, but we needed several hundred thousand dollars to leverage eight to nine million, which is what we were getting from the federal government in these programs, and so we built in what we needed for state money.

December 6th we were told to redo our budgets with *no* state dollars other than the appropriation we had gotten in 1987-1988, and that appropriation was the minimum that we needed for the state Planning Office to function. It had nothing to do with federal money; it gave us *no* money to work with the federal programs. They said, "Redo your budgets." Now, this was Judy Matteucci's doing.

We had a hearing on December 15th with the budget office that resulted in personnel cuts of five and a half positions and the reality that two programs couldn't function without state dollars—CSBG and planning. So by redoing the budgets I had to start cutting people out, which really meant we weren't going to be able to deliver the service. Now this is Christmas time, and this is the way it happens every other year in this process.

December 27th I was called and told that various programs in the agency would be leaving the agency, that they were going to break up the agency and that we would have to do new budgets on them. So all of this is going on. [laughter] Somehow the thought in the budget office was that if some of the programs got moved to welfare, and ultimately state planning got moved to the budget office itself, and the CDBG program

got moved to the state office of economic development—there was kind of this feeling that if the programs got moved, all the problems would go away. It began to build, this whole attitude that somehow the agency was not functioning properly at all and that I was part of the problem. No one would recognize that the problem was something I inherited, that I had been solving for four years, and I was very close to solving it totally. In the meantime, we continued to deliver all this great service all over the state, but internally there was no support for what we were doing, so Judy's idea was do away with the agency.

*You said the attitude was that the agency was not functioning, and yet it seems like it was a large agency that was commanding a large amount of federal dollars. Was there any undermining feeling or open feeling that this was too powerful an agency?*

No, no, no. It was the other way around. It was kind of this mishmash of programs that had been pulled together over the years that weren't real glamour programs, but they were delivering incredible service to people. Small business men were getting loans. Communities were building hospitals and doing redevelopment work to the tune of millions of dollars. Low-income people's homes were being weatherized so that their energy bills would be low. Poverty programs in the rural areas were being funded. Job training was being helped. Business people were getting government contracts. I mean, it was all "good news" kind of stuff. But they—the powers that be—were *dead* set against this agency getting any state money.

*How did you feel about it being directed at you personally, like it was your fault?*

I began to feel very personal, that no one wanted to listen to the realities of this agency and that I had inherited all of this. The whole problem was there when I arrived, and nobody cared about the successes that I had made out of things. They weren't about to give me what I needed to continue to function.

When this finally happened—they were going to start moving programs to different agencies—I still had not met with the Governor. Finally, on December 30th we had a hearing with the Governor. Actually, that's kind of your last ditch, where the Governor long before has given his priorities, and if you're not on his priority list, then the budget office is god. I mean, they're going to do to you what they want to do to you.

Judy Matteucci was just *incredibly* . . . I just don't know how to describe her. She had this tremendous amount of power and used it. Oh, what would be the right word? She manipulated government the way she wanted it to go, and she didn't care about people, where they fell, the effects of this on programs down the line. She was an evil person. And . . . I mean, there are twenty-five other major state agency heads who would tell you the same thing, although not if they are still in government, because she is now over in the Public Service Commission. She was just something awful to contend with. Almost everyone in state government had problems with her. I am not saying that it was just me, but my agency basically got divided up, and there still was no plan to meet the federal guidelines. There was no state money added. I still don't know to this day how they have resolved those problems with the feds. I really don't.

*Yes. Was this an issue that was making the papers?*

No, it wasn't making the papers.

*This was all happening internally?*

Right. This was not big news. I mean this was just bureaucratic stuff. But I went to my friends on the money committees. I had individual appointments, and I had approval from the Governor's office to do that, but yet it was so complicated, they just didn't want to hear about it. It was not high priority for them. It was not glamorous. Basically the budget office did to us what they wanted to do to us.

By January of 1989 I was going to have my staff cut by about two thirds. I was going to have about fifteen people and three or four programs. The rest were going various places. I just felt absolutely crushed that no one cared about the reality of what was happening to this agency.

There was no support in the Governor's office. In the middle of all this Bob Miller was taking over, and Scott Craigie was his chief of staff. He moved in as part of the transition. I made an appointment with Scott, and we had had a very good relationship up to that point. I had known him when he was a teacher doing senior citizen television programs in Las Vegas. I went to him with this whole picture, which was so complex, and I thought he listened with a sympathetic ear, but later on I learned that he hadn't. He said, "Fine," to Judy. "Whatever you need to do, go ahead and do it." So there was just *no* support.

I decided that I couldn't function. I felt very betrayed, because I had come to state government feeling that I had something to offer as a public administrator. There were incredibly good times in this agency where we were delivering service and going out into rural Nevada and connecting with the people we were delivering the service to. And the manner in which we did it, I know

that we did a good job. But my experience in working with the Governor's office was extremely negative.

*And this was Governor Bryan's office?*

Governor Bryan and his staff. [laughter] Right, which was a real disappointment to me and not something I expected.

I did expect from the very beginning when I accepted the appointment, that I had to submerge my identity as a public figure. I *knew* that from the very beginning, and I was willing to do that. I now was a public figure in my own right. I had my own reputation as a former elected official and from all these things I had done up to this point. But I knew that once you become an appointee of a Governor, then *they* are boss, and you do what you need to do to carry out their agenda. If you are not comfortable doing that, then you get out.

*Yes. And you and Dick Bryan had been so compatible in your beliefs and values prior to that, correct?*

That's right. That's right. There is a *lot* of difference between what it takes to be a Governor and what it takes to be a legislator—and legislator meaning like state legislator or, let's say, U.S. Senator, which he is now. Those jobs are totally different. Most people think of all public official jobs as all the same. Policy-making is *quite* different from administration, from the executive branch. What happened in reality—as I found when I got into state government, and I was now a part of the Governor's cabinet—is that what is really key are the people that the Governor appoints, the people that he gathers around him to do the job, because the Governor cannot be everywhere doing everything, obviously.

The staff that he creates and the appointments that he makes become critical—how the Governor gets them and leads *them* is crucial. Just like how I was trying to lead *my* middle managers—how was the Governor going to lead his department heads? Well, he didn't. We had two cabinet meetings a year, one right before the Christmas party and one right before the Fourth of July barbecue at the mansion sometime in the summer.

So the cabinet really never met. Whatever coordinating we did between agencies, we had to do on our own. The Legislature had created this interagency committee on economic development that was part of that economic plan when Dick was running for Governor. Well *that* group did meet, and so my agency was a part of that because it had a lot to do with economic development, particularly in the rural areas. Out of that, I connected with other key people like Stan Jones, the head of economic security; the job employment agency; Gene Paslov, the Superintendent of Education; Barbara Weinberg, who by that time was head of job training, which was a new federal program that answered directly to the Governor's office; economic development, which by that time was being run by Andy Grose; Larry Struve, who was head of the Department of Commerce; and the University System, which was being represented by Warren Fox. Anyway, there was a group of people—all department heads—that came together to share ideas on how we could better deliver service.

*You've just finished naming the other cabinet members and commenting that you only met twice a year, so there really was not leadership from Governor Bryan.*

Well, in terms of Governor Bryan getting his staff together—to really give them a vision

of what he wanted his administration to deliver to the people of Nevada and help the department heads provide leadership then for their staff—there was just a minimum of that. The people he had on his staff in his office would each be assigned various agencies, so I always had a liaison to my agency: first, Kay Zunino; later, Tim Hay and some others during the four years. I truly, in the time I was there, did *not* feel that those people really cared about helping my agency solve its problems and helping it get the Governor's ear when I needed it. [laughter]

Something was going on within the Governor's staff that led him to believe that I was out trying to toot my own horn, here and there, to the point I was called in and reprimanded by Governor Bryan on more than one occasion. He would say that he had heard that I was traveling too much—that I wasn't spending enough time in my office. This is always a big issue, because the press makes a big issue out of travel by government employees. The last thing the Governor wants are surprises where the press is down on something, and he reads about it in the paper. Well, you know, my job entailed quite a bit of travel because of the nature of the job and the federal money, but he was getting feedback from people that I was out running around “doing my thing.” I never was able to put my finger on who was doing that, but it was someone within the Governor's staff. Whether it was jealousy or whether it was wanting to hurt me, I don't know.

I don't know what it was, but I did not have access to the Governor to give him *my* picture of things nearly as often as I needed, and that was true of everybody. Everybody. I mean, it's a huge job. But there were a group of us who *did* have some really good times working together.



So these six agencies that had the most to do with economic development, we decided to get together for breakfast like once a month. We created some ideas that we felt the Governor should carry out that would be tying the private sector to what we were doing—a continuation of the kinds of things we talked about during the campaign. We were very energetic. We were all very creative people, and we loved getting together and talking about how things *could* be—how we could really be providing leadership in the state. We were finally told by the Governor's office we couldn't have breakfast together anymore—that we were generating stuff that the Governor's office didn't want to have to deal with.

It became really obvious that to do my job well was to come in at eight and leave at five and not take the initiative on anything that I didn't have to—don't rock the boat; don't muddy the waters; don't come up with brand new ideas that are going to cause people a lot more work. I mean, you *could not* be creative; you could *not* take initiative; it was *not* welcome.

*Firsthand experience at why so many government administrations are mediocre.*

Yes. And I was just very disappointed and very disillusioned. And then they started taking my agency and pulling it apart, and with the lack of support for the legal issues that my agency was dealing with, I just decided that it wasn't for me—that there was not a climate in which I could function; that I was not a bureaucrat. [laughter]

I was learning all the problems in managing a large staff—that for some reason I could not motivate that staff to do the things that I needed it to do. You know, I have motivated thousands of people to do things

in this state, but the climate in which I have done that has, much more often than not, been the volunteer, non-profit sector. When you get people in a bureaucratic setting where they're being paid, no matter what, whether it's corporate or government, the chemistry is different and I am not able to reach down and motivate people through that kind of setting. In fact, I become a barrier to things happening. I become an obstacle. And part of it is because I'm always moving so much faster than everybody else is thinking. I'm always out there with that vision, but they are not up with me following the vision. This is hindsight.

*At the time you weren't clear why?*

No, I wasn't. I just knew that I was not liked in the agency, and much of that was the middle managers did not like me because I was pressing them to be more than they wanted to be. I know that. And then I *could not* (the system did not allow me to) get past them to the rank and file. And it didn't allow me to get rid of them. See, it didn't allow me to get *rid* of those middle managers that were not ever going to be a part of my team. They just were not going to do that. They weren't going to do it my way.

*So you couldn't go down into your organization? You couldn't reach out across to other organizations, and you didn't have support from the top?*

And I didn't have support in the Governor's office. So I just thought, "I don't think I need this!" [laughter] And the *other* thing is that I had had to give up my public life—my personal public life—*totally* in order to be in this position.

Now, I was making good money. I was making over \$40,000, and so I was financially

independent and I was miserable. [laughter] I wasn't miserable all the time, but this gradually became misery because there was just no one who cared except my Deputy Director, Janie, who was always wonderful, and some of the staff who were always good and loyal but didn't have the power to help make the changes. One of those was Kathie MacLean, my secretary, whom I leaned on a lot and did a good job. There were people on the staff who, I think, admired what I was trying to do, but there weren't enough to make a critical mass to make the system change. It just wasn't going to happen.

*So when did you make the decision to leave that?*

Well, I made the decision in January. And I had put together quite a memo for the budget office. My memo of December 15 to Judy Matteucci was kind of my last ditch memo: "Need for state funding for N.O.C.S. administrative costs necessary to operate programs at current service level in compliance with federal law." I had testified two years earlier at the budget office that we could not continue to operate in the same manner. We didn't get any money then, and so now we're back with the problem compounded. I said, "Attached is a summary of significant changes that have occurred since 1982 when these block grants were first started and examples of cost-saving and revenue-enhancing measures that the entire staff has initiated."

And then this was a good description: "N.O.C.S. is a helping agency leveraging over eight million in non-state funds for the benefit of Nevadans. Programmatically and politically, we are a good news agency. Our grants and services help build the capacity of local governments to serve their

communities, of businesses to be profitable, and of the disadvantaged to become self-sufficient. We welcome your help in providing stability of funding so the agency may continue to serve the people of Nevada." Then I wrote a whole page of changes since 1982 resulting in both added responsibilities and increased costs. Then I added a whole page, single-spaced, of efforts at cost reduction and revenue enhancement since the fall of 1986, "in addition to the items in today's budget presentation." These were things we did to save money, to raise additional money, that resulted in their finally deciding to do away with the agency.

In summarizing what we *had* done, we had removed over \$700,000 in questioned costs on the part of the federal government. We had reduced administrative costs a *great* deal. And we had "organized and coordinated two rural community good will tours by First Lady Bonnie Bryan in connection with the rural volunteer training workshops during National Volunteer Recognition Week." And we had "taken the lead in documenting the negligence of the U.S. Farmers Home Administration in serving rural Nevada and pushing for improved action that resulted in their moving the Nevada state office from Salt Lake City to Carson City." Senator Reid had helped us a great deal on that. And we had, "at the request of Assemblyman Wendell Williams (a black Assemblyman in Las Vegas) and the Governor's office, organized and conducted a small business development seminar in West Las Vegas with numerous other state and federal agencies participating."

We had done just a *lot* of things along that line, and so I had summarized all of that for the Governor's office. By January, I had to tell my staff that some of them were moving to different agencies, some were being cut out totally. I mean, the morale in the whole office

was extremely low. Some of them felt it was my fault that all this was happening—that somehow I should have been able to deal with it better politically.

*And* lo and behold, I did a memo to Governor Miller. I had met with him on December 30th about the budget, and he got simply glazed eyes when I tried to pitch that the budget office was doing me wrong. February 2nd is when I sent a memo to the Governor saying, “I want you to know I’ve decided to explore other career opportunities in Nevada, and it’s my intention to leave my position within the next few months. I’ll be happy to work with anyone on your staff to apprise them of the nature of the work as N.O.C.S. Director so you can appoint someone to successfully carry out the job. I will let you know as soon as I have finalized my future plans, and we can plan together for as smooth a transition as possible.”

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## THE RENO-TAHOE COMPANY

Starting in January 1989 I was exploring what those other positions might be, and in February had found a unique opportunity through Bill Thornton to manage his company in Reno, the Reno-Tahoe Company, which was basically a tourism-related agency doing things very similar to the types of business my own companies had done in Las Vegas. I had known Bill over the years, even after I went off the Tourism Commission. I think he stayed on for awhile. We actually ran into each other at the Cowboy Poetry gathering out in Elko that January. He had flown out in his own plane, and I had taken a group of people on tour out there just for fun with Jim McCormick from the Unitarian Church. We ended up having brunch together out at a bed-and-breakfast in Lamoille. I sat with Bill and he said, "How are things going?"

I said, "Well, in reality, I'm looking for a job."

I had starting letting a few people know that I just was not going to stay, and I wanted to stay in northern Nevada. I ended up flying home that day with him in his airplane,

and we talked all the way back from Elko to Reno. He said, "You know, I just happen to be looking for somebody to manage my company." Over the next two or three weeks we got together several times and ultimately agreed that I would go to work for him.

It was important to me to find another position before it became public that I was leaving state government. I had an agreement with the Governor's office that they weren't going to announce this pending resignation quite yet. Then on March 3rd I did send a memo to the Governor. Larry Henry, who was his press secretary, issued a press release announcing that I was resigning effective March 31st and that I would begin work April 3rd as general manager of the Reno-Tahoe Company. The Governor was quoted as saying, "Jean has been a valuable asset to the state during her service. She is experienced and knows Nevada well. Her skills will be a plus for tourism in Nevada. I look forward to working with her in the future." Then it listed some of my credits.

The Governor never resisted my leaving at all. I mean, he was totally in over his head,

[laughter] partially because Dick Bryan had *not* really given him the kind of transition opportunities he needed to know what being Governor was all about. As Lieutenant Governor, he was not in on all the things that related to being Governor. He had to learn it the hard way real quickly. My agency was such a small blimp on the horizon that I do not fault him for that. Part of the hurt is that he went along with his staff—basically Scott Craigie and Judy Matteucci—simply saying, “This is the best thing. This is what we need to do with this agency, and if it means Jean Ford leaving, tough.” There was nobody in a position of power who wanted me to stay; no one.

*And he didn't question that?*

No.

*That's the only point where you felt like you could fault him, is he didn't question that?*

Yes. I know what-all he was dealing with at that point in time. And he had to rely on his staff to make decisions, and certainly what was happening to my agency was very small compared with the rest.

Well, I sent a memo to my staff on March 3rd, attaching the memo I had sent to the Governor, saying that I was accepting a position in the private sector. Then I had a month there where I was in transition. And, you know, they did *not* put anyone in my place. The Legislature was meeting by this time, and my agency was split up into all these different agency budgets, and by July, it was scattered all over the place; it had been divided up.

*So there is no more Office of Community Services?*

Well, there is. What was left was some of the energy programs. I don't think there is anything by that title right now—I really don't, because the really big ones all were taken away; they went to economic development and to welfare and to the budget office itself.

So I left state government. I was *very* low, in that I just knew what I had to bring to state government was good, and I knew in my personal and professional relationships with the clients that we served—which were local governments, which were local officials, which were local non-profit organizations all over the state—that I did nothing but build good will for the state and for me for those four years. That was another way that I got to know Nevada, and I just felt really badly that I couldn't continue serving in that manner. But it was not worth it to me to try to stick around.

*I guess this is one of those painful questions. But you felt like you had failed earlier at one of your businesses—the Jean Ford Associates.*

Yes.

*Did this feel like a failure? You said you were real low. Is that why?*

Yes, it did. I felt like I failed. I felt like I should have been able to conquer the problems that came up.

*In hindsight, do you still feel that way?*

Well, yes. Obviously, I didn't have the skills to pull that staff of forty together around me and have them function in a really satisfactory manner, and so I learned that that setting is not my *forté*—working with a large staff in a hierarchical setting.

I recognize the world of politics. I was saddened by the lack of incentive by the



Governor's office in really taking the initiative. I mean, the Governor's office *did* take the initiative in some things, and there were good things that happened, and the economy started improving, and certainly economic development and tourism have done good works. And there were good things that happened as a result of the Bryan administration, but not nearly what it could have been had the talents of the people on the staff in the administration at that time been allowed to function more creatively. It could have been a lot more. I was sad that that was the case.

I really had lost track of all these other worlds I had functioned in soon after I went there in 1985. I had been working on this Friends of Nevada Wilderness thing, and when I accepted the Bryan appointment, I had to give all that up. But I wanted to write a letter of support for the Nevada Wilderness Bill. This is the bill that now was coming out in Congress with Harry Reid as its sponsor. Mary Forrester, who was still working for me and tying up things in Las Vegas, drafted a letter on Nevada Discovery Tours stationery that was a letter of support to the congressional delegation on this bill. I sent it over to Governor Bryan's office as a courtesy, and he refused to let me send the letter. He was just *really* incensed that I would even consider that it was appropriate for me to send a letter to someone on a political issue that had nothing to do with the job which he had appointed me to.

I just learned very quickly that I could do *nothing* as Jean Ford while I was in that appointment, and so I lost touch with the women's movement. I didn't have time, and I had moved to northern Nevada, so I didn't have my old connections in Las Vegas. I still maintained my membership in the League and my membership in the Women's Political Caucus.

I joined a group that was a *very* big plus for awhile until the Governor's office turned on me for it, and that was Women Executives in State Government. This had just been formed at the national level, and it was a powerful group. I don't know if it's still functioning, but it was right at the time when women were moving into positions of power in elective office all across the country. Ann Richards had become Governor of Texas, and women were getting cabinet posts, and women were getting major posts in state government all over. This group was created to be a support system for those women. Linda Ryan, my predecessor in Community Services, had joined and when we had lunch together one of the things she said to me was, "One of the things you'll love about this is being able to belong to Women Executives in State Government, and your membership and your way to those meetings will be paid as a part of your job, because that's one of the professional perks of being in your position."

So fairly early on I went to one of those meetings and, of course, here I found old friends who had been legislators or League leaders or library leaders. So here was another mix of the networking of women across the country. I went to those meetings, and I *loved* being a part of that. Eventually, the Governor's office refused to pay my way and said, "This is not an appropriate thing for you to do." And yet it was something that Linda had done before me. So there was just a feeling that, you know, "Keep her in line, don't let her get out there too far on her own."

During this time, a group of people in southern Nevada decided they wanted to have a Governor's conference on women, but they really didn't want the Governor involved; they just wanted to call it the Governor's Conference on Women! [laughter] Well, they ended up doing that, and they wanted me to

be on the planning committee. Of course, I *loved* that kind of thing, but I was not able to do that; I could not do *anything* like that.

*So part of the ending of this job was finding yourself without your usual activities and support groups around you?*

That's right. That's right. I had pulled away from all of that world I'd been a part of, except the world of volunteerism which by then I had created within my own office, but then it was rejected by the Governor's office. The things that really meant so much to me I wasn't doing, and the things I had been doing were not successful, were not appreciated. So I just decided at that point in time I didn't belong, but I felt really sad about that.

February 13th, 1989, Mike O'Callaghan in his column "Where I Stand" in the *Las Vegas Sun* rattled on about a whole range of things. He took Marvin Sedway to task, who was a very powerful Assemblyman at that point in time. But then at the bottom of a lot of loose ends kinds of things, he said, "Jean Ford, a better than average legislator and now state Director of Community Services, had better get her act together or she will be looking for a new job. She's one more example that good legislators oftentimes are lousy executives." This came out in Mike O'Callaghan's column. So there were people in state government feeding this kind of stuff—that my agency was in trouble because of me. That's another time when it hurts—when the press is unfair and not telling the whole story. But you have to grin and bear it.

A bill that Hank Greenspun very strongly wanted to pass in the 1981 session was AB200. The bill was really a bad bill. It had to do with closing the site for nuclear waste that was at Beatty, which was a commercial site that

was being used at the time by industry with permission of the state. Greenspun wanted that site closed, and basically the bill did that, but it also did some other things—like it would have revoked all permits in the state including hazardous chemical waste permits in other parts of the state. It was in direct conflict with some new, stiffer laws on transportation and handling of waste that had been passed earlier in the session, but he didn't care about what else happened as long as his part of the bill passed. Well, the reality is if there are other things in the bill, then that does affect it. In the Senate, the human resources committee didn't make any attempt to clean up the bill and get these conflicts out of it so that just what Hank Greenspun wanted would remain in the bill. It was really irresponsible to vote this kind of bill out, and the bill did not pass. It would have brought litigation from companies using the site, since it would have violated their contracts without compensation. There were a whole bunch of things.

Well, there was real pressure from Governor List, his staff, Ace Martel, and Hank Greenspun . . . all of those. Legislators didn't like that and some decided they were not going to bow down, particularly when no one was interested in cleaning up the bill to make it only deal with the Beatty site. This wasn't the only hot issue in those closing days of the session. Abortion, the usury law, landlord-tenant relations, a bill relating to the Henderson dog track, racing commission—these were all really hot political issues that were floating around.

Hank Greenspun was insulted, because in the midst of all this, I didn't return his phone call. The Governor also called me personally and asked me to vote his way. That was the only time that Governor List called me all session. After I got home, I tried to meet with Greenspun.

I talked with Mike O'Callaghan, who said he could do nothing, that it was Hank's pet project. I talked with Ruthe Deskin, who said the same thing—that she would try to set up an appointment for me with Hank and called me later saying, "Hank says no. He doesn't want to talk with you about it." So he proceeded to write these editorials attacking me, and I wasn't the only one that he was aiming at—I recall Joe Neal was also on his list. Well, this continued on his part for a year and a half!

March 2, 1983 I wrote an open letter to the paper in response to a column he had written February 27, a year and a half after the incident. I had gone to an attorney and asked what my rights were, and at the end of the letter I copied that attorney, Isabel Fleisher. The letter was very strong. It referred to his column, and then I said, "I feel that that column was written with actual malice as defined in NRS41.332, and certainly contains libel as defined in NRS200.150, with the intent of impeaching my honesty, integrity, virtue and reputation." I demanded "a retraction of the libelous and false statements made about me, such retraction to be made in the same visible placement in the *Sun* as your original article. Had you or anyone else from the paper bothered to check out the facts, you would know that the following statements in your column are absolutely false." There were three more-or-less minor statements that he had made which he considered fact, which I pointed out were absolutely false, and I indicated the fact relating to each one. When I came home from the session I had attempted to meet with him, and he had refused and instead "has continued over the last eighteen months to blindly attack our vote, giving no opportunity for explanation."

Why was he doing this? Well, for some reason he got the idea that I was really angling

to get a job with state government. Some of what he said is, "There are reports that the present job is the forerunner of a full-time state job as soon as all the constitutional prohibitions are out of the way." There was no work in that arena at that point in time. I had not asked for a full-time position, and it hadn't been offered to me, so that was just something he cooked up. I stated that "I prefer to remain a part of private enterprise and make the services of my business available to business, education, government, et cetera." I listed a couple of contracts that I had that I was working on; then I went ahead and said: "There is absolutely no evidence that I am sitting around waiting for favors or appointments from the Bryan administration. On the other hand, my twenty years of leadership and community service in Nevada have prepared me to be superbly qualified to carry out numerous services for state and local government. I have every right to pursue contracts in the areas of my expertise, and state or local officials should be able to consider using my services without fear of automatic ridicule or censure based on your irrational personal grudge. You do a disservice to my staff, as well as me, with your libelous remarks."

Here are some of the things that Greenspun had said: "Ford is coming through the back door . . . . Appears totally unqualified . . . . Going for a cushy job and a fat pension . . . . An appropriate job for milady is Keeper of the Nevada Zoo." [laughter] His overall insinuation was that my activities were "of the same questionable nature as those of Rita Lavelle of the Environmental Protection Agency," who was a federal official who was indicted for wrongdoing of some kind back about the time that I was in the Legislature. His first column compared me to her. It was just an effort to impugn my reputation and

cause my business not to succeed, and it was working. [laughter]

*You were having problems?*

I mean, when someone like Hank Greenspun does this to you publicly, people think twice about associating with you. They just don't need that headache, the hassle that might come from stroking him the wrong way. [laughter] I ended my letter by saying: "While you indicate that you are sick and tired of the politicians who continually make monkeys of us; I can assure you that *I* am sick and tired of editors such as you using the power of the pen to destroy sincere and competent public servants who dare to cast their votes based on rational consideration of the issue, instead of political expediency and fear of newspaper editors who abuse their power. Further, your misuse of your column to deliberately malign persons in private enterprise, to hurt their relationship with business and professional associates, is totally irresponsible. As businesswoman, Jean Ford, I demand under NRS41.336 a retraction of your libelous and slanderous statements."

Well, obviously I did not get that retraction. In fact, all this did was give him an opportunity to write another column of some kind. And so that, I think, was the end of it. I did speak with Brian Greenspun two or three times—his son who was gradually taking over a lot of the responsibilities of the paper. I think that Brian did not share his father's feelings. I think he recognized here was a personal vendetta in place. [laughter] There wasn't anything he could do about it, but I think that he recognized that what had been done to me was inappropriate.

*So Hank Greenspun wrote one more column at least based on this?*

I think he did. I think he did.

*Did he stop after that?*

Yes, I think he felt he had done me enough damage, or he went on to another cause. [laughter] I mean, I wasn't in office. I was struggling to make a business work that wasn't doing that well. So maybe he thought he had achieved his goal. I don't know.

The press is a very mixed bag. I've always, in spite of this, tended to first look at the press as a friend, as good people out there trying to do appropriate kinds of things. I'm sure I've had more friendly press than unfriendly press. But when they come at it in such an irrational way, it just really does hurt, and this was one of several times. We've mentioned some of the others, and it hurt each time. But you go on, and you learn really that you can never win. [laughter] So the next time if something like that happens, you grin and bear it. It doesn't do any good to try to fight openly because they always get the last word.

*Yes. If you publish the paper, you get the last word. [laughter]*

Yes, right.

*Although, I can't help but wonder if that letter, at some level, put him on notice, even though he did keep going one more time. You didn't get what you wanted, but he did finally stop.*

Well that could be, too. That's true. And I think Isabel felt there was enough meat in the law under those two sections that perhaps it would give him cause to think twice about his keeping on.

*Yes, yes. So even though he got the last word, you may have won the war overall with him. [laughter]*

Yes, well that's true. I think actually by this time he was kind of not well, too. I can't remember when he died, but he was losing his ability to function the way he had always functioned.

*Yes, but he still had that power of the press.*

Oh boy, oh boy! That's right.

In 1989, I was looking at what I wanted to do next. Well, it all happened pretty fast. I decided to accept this offer from Bill Thornton, and I've got just a short note in my career planning file about my concerns about doing that. I had started developing career work opportunities, kind of an option list, in late 1988 and early 1989 because I could see that I didn't want to stay in state government the way things were going.

I looked at the possibility of going to work for Carson City. I thought that I could bring something to Carson City in the area of working on community relations—volunteerism, special projects, tourism, grant-writing and that kind of thing. I looked at Western Nevada Community College—options that might be there in Continuing Education or Community Relations. I looked at the possibility of becoming a lobbyist, as so many of my colleagues had done, for pay—living in Carson and just turning to becoming the lobbyist during the session for a range of groups. I was *never* comfortable with that idea. I just always felt I could not be a lobbyist for someone (unless I was just so sold on what they wanted done) that I never seriously considered that very long. I mean, I lobbied and to this day have informally lobbied on things I cared about, but the idea of having then to do it for pay to represent somebody, I was not comfortable with that.

*Because it had to be an issue that was important to you?*

Yes, I just couldn't artificially get enthusiastic about my client's things just because my client wanted them. I just couldn't do that, so I kind of rejected that pretty quickly. You know, if I could have seen doing it for libraries and environmental groups and women's issues—that kind of thing—maybe yes. But those were the groups that didn't have money to pay full-time lobbyists.

I thought about the university system at that point, and I even made a couple of inquiries. John Unrue was the acting President down at UNLV at that time, and that's the only thing on this list in southern Nevada. I obviously preferred to stay up here if I could.

I did kind of ask the question: What's most important to me at this point? Now, here I am at another decision-making point, and I've got just three or four phrases that I wrote down as being real important. One was "the freedom to be me." [laughter] I just think that really says it. I now had been through this experience of being what other people wanted me to be as a state government administrator. And by "freedom to be me," I meant to be able to create and to organize—that I wanted to be able to do that and not have a system or a boss sitting on my head telling me exactly how and when I could do that.

I wanted to do something with which there were professional connections. I realized in all the things I had done that I really enjoyed, there were national groups that I could join that led me to networking across the country with people who were doing the same thing. And so getting into some kind of work that again had a professional network that I could join and be a part of seemed real important to me. I didn't want to work all by myself. I wanted to connect with others who were doing the kinds of things I was doing.



And then “status”—I wanted something that would recognize my talent and ability. So I was looking for something that wasn’t “just a job.” Part of that was wanting to save face for my departure from state government. Even though the Governor allowed me to leave under very positive terms, even saying nice things about me in his press release, et cetera, then there was the Mike O’Callaghan comment about, “They’re going to get rid of her if she’s not careful,” and all that. The people on the inside knew that there was not a happy connection there. So it was important to me to get a position that I could feel good about and that others would look at and say, “Oh, well, she went right to that great new job.”

*So that it wouldn’t be a step down?*

That’s right. That’s right. And then “income and compensation”—I was looking for enough to live on. [laughter] I had been making over \$40,000 a year in state government, and that sounded like a nice round figure to go for. That would be neat if I could continue to do that. But I also, at that point, was willing to work part-time at less, so that I would have some money and some time to go do personal interest things. I was thinking of something that might last three to five years.

So those were kind of my parameters for, “What do I do next?” And then I wanted to be sure that I would have some time off from that job; that it wouldn’t be so all consuming that I couldn’t make some special connections with my daughters; that I couldn’t entertain; (I loved entertaining in my home, having dinner parties and that kind of thing) that I could also continue to explore the west; and that I could be active in my church. I had joined and started being active in the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship during the time I

was in Carson as the Director of Community Services. So I wanted to be able to continue those things.

Well, the job with Bill Thornton really fit all of these parameters, and so we talked and negotiated, and I went there. Now I had some concerns about it. I knew that I was putting my reputation on the line when I went to work for him. To work for him was to be the manager of the Reno-Tahoe Company. We’ll come back to exactly what that was. But he had had this company for about ten years. It was housed in the Reno-Tahoe Visitors Center, which was the old Oddfellows Building in downtown Reno on Sierra Street.

*Which is now where a parking garage is, correct?*

The high-rise parking garage is there, right. So I knew that I was taking a risk—a considerable risk—in taking this job because I was going to be responsible for the overall management of this company. Now, I was just coming from a place where being responsible for the overall management of something had not left a good taste in my mouth; I had not done what I felt was a really good job of that. So here I am going into the private sector, but into a really similar position—a general management administrative position. It was smaller staff and more narrow focus, but with the responsibility of overall management.

I could see right there that that would not allow me a lot of time to use what I considered my own strengths, which was designing tours, running the tours—the kinds of things I did with my own tour company and that I knew I did well. As the general manager, I should be getting other people to do those things. I would be having the overall administrative responsibility.

I recognized that my success in that job would depend largely upon my staff—that it was not a position where I could go make it happen by myself. I was going to get a staff I didn't even know who they were.

*Because the staff, once again, was already in place?*

Right, right. And I would need time to deliver. These were all my concerns.

Now the interest and the excitement of it, there were more positives than there were these concerns that led me to accept the position. I knew going into it that I was taking a risk, you know, but that's my nature. I've taken risks all along the way. [laughter]

I *loved* the idea of getting back into tourism and concentrating on delivering services that I knew could be done. I knew enough about northern Nevada that I felt it was a worthy destination to work on, and I liked the challenge of making it happen. And I liked Bill Thornton a lot as a person. I felt comfortable with him. I did go around and talk with several people who had worked with and for him. They said basically, "This is a very difficult man [laughter] to work with, and if you can make it work, it will be a real positive thing. And it sounds like that you're starting off and you're going into it with your eyes open and that you both are agreeing on a variety of things." They said, "You need to have it real clear what it is you want to do—real clear understanding with him."

Frankie Sue Del Papa is one person I spoke with, because Frankie Sue had been actually a law partner of his part of the time when she came back from Washington and was on the Board of Regents. And she, in particular, did not say (no one said), "Steer clear of him; it's nothing but disaster." But they all had cautions that this was a person that I

just needed to have really clear understanding about what we were doing. That I just needed to make sure that the direction I was headed was one he was going to support. So I did that in every way I could, you know. [laughter]

We had an agreement that we both signed the first week in March that said that I would stay at least two years and assume the duties of general manager of the Reno-Tahoe Company located at 135 North Sierra. And this was supervision of: (1) personnel and activities related to The Ticket Station, which was a retail outlet right there in the store that sold tickets to downtown events and also had souvenirs—memorabilia, a variety of flags, posters, T-shirts and things about Reno; (2) the gaming tour, which was another whole piece of this. Bill had a gaming school on the second floor of this building. Our offices were in the basement. The gaming school was where people went to learn how to deal. He had started along with that a gaming tour where the public would come in and tour and go to the school. The students would deal to the public, and the public would learn how to play twenty-one.

*At the same time that the dealers were being trained?*

Right, and they would learn about gaming as an activity and how to maximize their time in Reno and just little anecdotes, memorabilia, trivia about gaming. So it was a tour. First they came to the school and got their introduction and hands-on, and then they were walked down to the Cal-Neva—in which Bill also was a major stock-holder—and given a behind-the-scenes tour of the Cal-Neva, of an actual casino, even looking down through the security windows down onto the floor. So there had to be a tour guide that took them from the gaming school down to the

Cal-Neva, and then the group would end at that point, or they'd bring them back. We tried various things like showing them slides or movies of Reno, setting up a little hospitality center in the building. But anyway, the gaming tour was part of my responsibility; and then (3) the program department's services to conventions, tours and other group events. So here was a multi-faceted tourism-related company.

In this latter area, we belonged to the National Tour Association (NTA), which I had belonged to with my own company, and we offered ground-handling services to tours coming into town. We met them at the airport. We planned all their sightseeing while they were in town. We had a list of guides that we drew from of men and women, retired people in Reno, who would come out to act as guides by the hour. We offered a whole range of things, also working with conventions. I had done all of this with my own company. There was a staff of eight, I think, to start with. And so, those were basically the three major areas.

I was to report to Bill Thornton and consult with him prior to major actions relating to personnel and new contracts and all of that. His office was in the First National Bank Building just a block away, so there was a lot of movement back and forth. He would be over everyday sometime to our place, and I would be at his place several times a week.

I agreed by October to make a report to him about our competitive position within the northern Nevada area and recommend future actions relating to products and services. Then his agreement was to pay me, you know, X amount and pay travel allowance, if I were to go representing the company out of town, and to have health benefits and that type of thing.

Soon after I wrote out a memo outlining some extra-curricular activities that I wanted to be involved in. I wanted to make clear that he approved of that, and so there were three things that I had listed for approval. I had, at that point, been asked and agreed to serve on the board of the Pioneer Center [Reno Performing Arts Center Association, a non-profit organization which manages the Pioneer Center for the Performing Arts in Reno], which was just becoming a public entity under the Reno-Sparks Convention & Visitors Authority. I was on the executive committee and planning committee. Kathie Bartlett was the Chair at the time of this governing body for the Pioneer Center that was just being created. Kathie was the key leader in all of that. It involved about three meetings a month, and I said I thought there were mutual benefits to be derived from my association with that for the Reno-Tahoe Company. He agreed, and so I continued to serve on that board, actually even after I went to the university.

The Governor's Conference on Libraries—there was a 1990 conference that was gearing up to happen all over the state, and then a Nevada delegation was going to another White House conference. I had agreed to chair the northern regional meeting of that conference in March of 1990, and then had agreed to chair the plenary sessions of the statewide conference in May in Las Vegas. I would travel at my own expense and do it on my own time, but I wanted to do that. He agreed that I could do that, too.

The Nevada Women's Forum was a third thing. I mentioned that I had belonged to the National Women Executives in State Government. There was another group that I started attending called the International Women's Forum, which was simply an international network of high-achieving

women all over the country, and I ended up at two of their conferences kind of by accident. I had not joined. Well, I did join as an individual member. One of their meetings was in Phoenix and another was in New York City, and it was just a very exciting, empowering group to be around. Many states had created their own Women's Forum to belong to this International, so the pressure was on me from these people to create a Nevada Women's Forum to join the International Women's Forum. Right at this point, I was wanting to do that, and so I said to Bill, "In the last five years I've attended several meetings of the International Women's Forum and have wanted to work with other Nevada women to see if there was interest in creating a Nevada Women's Forum—a small network of Nevada women with considerable achievements to their name. Some Nevada women are now considering this action and will be attending the spring retreat at Salishan on the Oregon coast in March, and I am tentatively planning to go and also using comp time to do that."

He did approve all of that and then actually said in a memo to me, "I'd like to discuss the Pioneer Center further," because he really saw that as being good for his business. Out of that, ultimately, he ended up putting the Bass Ticket Outlet into the Pioneer Center, and I was the liaison to a lot of that happening.

I was there two years. By the end of the second year, Bill and I both knew more about why the company had never made any money, and he was, I think, ready for me to go. In fact, he basically fired me. He basically called me in and said, "You know, the two years are up. For a variety of reasons, I choose not to continue on this plan."

There were a lot of things happening in downtown Reno then, one of which was a look at his building there and the need for high-rise parking. The downtown redevelopment

people were real involved in where that parking was going to go, and the plan was to put it right next to where his building was. Ultimately, they ended up encompassing the area of his building. And he did not—which I always found interesting—he did not fight that. Out here was a historic building in downtown Reno that he had total control over. Well not total. Warren Nelson, I think, had some joint ownership in the building, but he didn't fight tearing it down. I think he was tired at that time of trying to make a bunch of things work. He, too, is one who has many balls in the air, all of a business nature. And I think he was disappointed that some of the things we had set out to do, we didn't accomplish. He didn't like to recognize that one of the reasons that we didn't accomplish them was his style of how he wanted the business to be run. We spent a considerable amount of time on this together.

I put together a report to him after the first year of what we had accomplished. He had given me basically everything I asked for. I mean, I just *could* not complain. I said to him we have to get into the modern world computer-wise. We have to be able to have both of us manage our own finances. At that point, his own staff in his law office was doing all the financial accounting, and that was not a good situation. We needed to be accountable and running our own office, so we knew we could draw up the information we needed when needed, so we needed a computer system. We actually needed a network of computers in the office, because we had these various diverse areas of the company that needed to communicate with each other, and we needed software packages that would help us do all of this. I mean, I had gone out and bought my own word processor at the beginning, because I just couldn't function without something and the office had none

of that kind of stuff. So he ended up putting a *large* amount of money into a computer network for us.

We hired more staff. We initiated new programs. A year later we had gone from six staff to twelve—ten full-time and two part-time. We had raised the salaries of the people we did have. One of the things that I felt was we were losing good people due to the salary that was being paid and convinced him that we ought to be paying more.

We had major programs within The Ticket Station. We had initiated some new programs. We had gotten a major contract with Fiesta West, which was a Canadian-based tour company bringing gaming junkets into Reno, and we got the major ground-handling contract with them where three or four times a week we met their planes at the airport and gave their people the Reno welcome—gave them coupon books, did an orientation for their people the next day at our Ticket Station and just did a whole range of things for them. That was a major piece of business that we got and carried out that year. We developed a better way of handling the gaming tour. We did a lot in the destination management arena.

We got a major contract to do a convention party for the California Grocers Association. They would come to Reno every year to have their big convention, and they would hire a different destination management company to do those. We got the contract to do this party, which was a night in Virginia City. It took twenty-nine buses to get their people up the hill from the hotels—they were scattered all over Reno—to Virginia City. We had like a three-ring circus going on up there from about four in the afternoon until ten at night that included street performers, and then everybody had a coupon for dinner. They were spread out so that the green coupons

went to the Silver Palace and the red coupons went to the Comstock, so they didn't all converge on the same place, but they all had the same menu. We worked with the Virginia City people and just worked out a major event that night where we had . . . twenty-nine times fifty—however many people that is.

*Yes, that sounds like an organizational challenge.*

It was a *major* challenge. We hired everybody we knew in town as tour guides, and we had training for those tour guides. But anyway, it was a major success and we had a good budget to work with.

We did programming for the United States Sub Vets Reunion that came to Reno for the First Armored Division Reunion. These military reunions are a big source of business.

We connected with some of the mining companies and provided tours to the modern day gold rush—one, in particular, sponsored by the State Department for media from the United Nations wanting to see the modern day gold rush. Now this was underwritten by some of the mining companies: Echo Bay, who had mines in Battle Mountain and Smokey Valley; I think, American Barrick was probably involved with that. We ended up then doing many tours for mining companies of potential investors in the mines or media or whatever.

See, here I was designing and all that, but I was not leading any of the tours. We were hiring guides to go out, which killed me, that I couldn't be out there on the bus helping lead the tour. But we had some excellent guides that did that. We did some *really* creative things, like on the Echo Bay gold mining tour. The man we worked with, who was out of Denver, really loved working with us and designing interesting things to do,



and he was a wine buff—a California wine buff. So we decided to have a wine-tasting party on the bus on one of these segments of driving between these isolated mines. He gave us basically carte blanche, and we went down to Napa-Sonoma, and those guys worked with us there on picking really good California wines. I mean, budget was almost no object. We had these incredible wines on the bus for all these media from the State Department to have this wine and cheese party and stuff like that, which were very successful.

So we did a whole range of things. We were out marketing and trying to deliver on as much as we could. I had this idea of something that I felt would be really fun to do and was being done across the country in communities on New Year's Eve. It was called "First Night," and it's still happening in many cities. It originated in Boston about twenty years ago, now. It's a non-alcoholic, family-oriented celebration of the New Year that has an emphasis on the arts. I had attended it in Boston one of the years I went back to visit my daughter, and I had read about it in other states and thought it was just the most exciting idea. So I went to Bill and said, "Why don't we try to do something like this in downtown Reno?"

Well, this was a real challenge because of the nature of downtown Reno, but we did do it. We hired a woman named Jo Anna Philips to come in and be the coordinator of it. We did have a wide range of performing arts in multiple locations: we were at the Pioneer Center in the basement and the auditorium; we were at the Sierra Arts Foundation; and we were at the Nevada Museum of Art. Those were the three venues and we had balloons in between them creating a path that families could follow. We had all kinds of activities in the afternoon at the two museums.

The Governor came down and did storytelling—Governor Miller and Sandy, the First Lady—for children there in the afternoon. We had face-painting and all kinds of activities down at the Sierra Arts Foundation. Then we had just continuous entertainment. We commissioned a dance group that Martina Young had at the university campus to do a special dance honoring Reno and New Year's Eve, and that was in the Pioneer auditorium. Then we ended with a big band—a Zydeco Band—in the evening.

Well, this was a major event, and we got about 1200 people out that evening, and it was a good beginning. The people who came got a really good feeling about coming.

Unfortunately, it didn't *begin* to pay its own way, and we knew that was going to happen several weeks out. I went to Bill and just said, "Look, here's what's going on. We've been able to put this and this and this together, but we haven't been able to find sponsors to begin to match the cost." And so he agreed to go ahead and pick up the tab. He wanted to proceed with the event, and he was just fabulous in that regard.

I began to realize that it was both a high and a low in working for him, because we saw that the potential of the event was everything I had thought it could be. I realized fairly soon after I hired Jo Anna Philips that she was not the right person to run the event. Hiring her was about the worst decision I made during the time I was there. It just was a case where, I mean, she was bright and attractive and presented an excellent, first-glance appearance and had some good background. But when it came to really doing the event, she had some really different ideas. She and I did not work well. She did not want to share them with me, and I had some very definite ideas about what I thought would work, and yet I had to delegate it to her. She brought a

lot of strengths to it. She brought some really key people that wanted to work with her. So she brought a lot of good things to it, but she didn't bring the know-how—how to really tie it all together and to get the volunteers it was going to take to run it.

We became in real conflict with each other in the course of putting it on. I had to jump in a month out and just design the whole volunteer side of it or we wouldn't have had anything going on. She was off working with all of the entertainers, but not developing how it was ever going to come together that night. We had to have this huge core of volunteers to make it work. And so, you know, we learned a lot. Bill . . . it cost him a bundle of money. The press was excellent on it, so it was an idea worth doing. Obviously, to do in Reno takes some careful maneuvering, because the casinos are really questioning anything that doesn't bring people to them. But anyway, that was a major event that we did.

Other kinds of things that we got into, that really drained us from being the profit-making organization that Bill wanted, were the many kinds of things that he personally wanted the company to do for *him*. He saw this company as one that, if he wanted to have a special party for someone, he could call up on a Monday and two weeks later we put on that party at the Reno-Tahoe Visitors Center, and the expenses for the party came out of our operating money. The time and energy it took to put it on had to bump away everything else we were doing.

In other words, he would call up with a personal priority and that had to take top priority, no matter what else we were doing. He just couldn't understand [laughter] that that was shooting us in the foot, in terms of this marketing plan we had for functioning—for marketing our services, for delivering our

services. For him to expect us to make enough money to cover these personal parties that he wanted to have at the same time, it was pretty unrealistic.

*And you had numerous conversations with him about this, you said?*

Oh yes, right. Well, I mean, yes. I began to realize, you know, that this was the way he intended for it to be. So then I started trying to document how this was not helping us move along toward our mutual goal. He was rigid in his position, that this was his company and if he wanted us to do certain things, he had a right to ask us to do them, and that he was right, you know.

*Because he was sole owner of the company?*

That's right. That's right. So somewhere here I have some examples of these, because I have a bunch of notes from a staff meeting, and then the personal conversations with him—my notes getting ready to meet with him and trying to justify my position—just very good examples of why we weren't being able to make money.

*But there was no way to make progress on that? He just was adamant?*

Well, that's right. He had his own little world he lived in, and he just saw the Reno-Tahoe Company as a support system for that world. He would often meet people he would want to personally sponsor. Greg LeMond was one of those—the cyclist—and so we had to do a *lot* of things around his endorsing Greg LeMond. We had to deliver on, basically, these public relations campaigns, like I think he may have had a reception for Greg LeMond at The Ticket Station which we put on. We sent

out the invitations, and we planned the food; we saw that the whole thing happened. And, you know, that cost the company quite a bit of money, but that's something Bill wanted done so we did it.

There were lots of events that he wanted to give a lot of tickets away. I mean, just this is his personal style. Well, that came out of The Ticket Station's profit. The Sheep Dip—things that go on in Reno for which he is very generous with his time and money and support. That's wonderful, except don't be trying to make money with this company at the same time. That just became obvious that he wasn't going to change and that we couldn't make a profit.

*And the expectation, though, was still that you would make a profit with the company?*

That's right. That's right. That's right. Yes, yes. And I pushed him, just a lot, in directions he'd never been. I mean, he gave a lot. [laughter] He made a lot of concessions. He let me do it my way in innumerable ways, but he still had his own agenda.

It was about a year into the job when I had the first real indication that I was not in charge. That was when he told me to fire one of our staff in the company. We had hired somebody that was . . . I think she was even part-time.

We had a big retreat out at Donner Lake at this resort that he has part interest in. I really tried to use good professional techniques, and we guided the whole staff out there and did a lot of visioning. Then we would come back, and he would not follow what came out of that. He wouldn't let the staff really function as a team. He had his own ideas then, and he would veto or he would make a change in the plan.

So at some point, this woman employee did not please him, and he basically told me

to fire her, and I did. I knew that it was not fair for her. That was my really first strong indication that I was never going to be in charge really; that in the final analysis, Bill was it. And the staff knew that, too, see. So that undermined my ability to motivate them. Then some of the staff would try to work around me to establish their own little agreements with Bill about [laughter] what they were going to be doing, and so it just became very muddy.

I still loved the business. I loved working again in tourism, and we did a lot of exciting things. But I went back to the staff and I went to Bill—and this was now like January of 1991, it would be—and I said, "OK, we *have* to do a business plan. We *have* to have a plan that we all agree is what we're following, and so I want to get the staff together and again rethink these things. Things are not working. We're not making money, so we need to get really clear about what part of the business we need to drop, and we need to decide on what products will work. I want to spend some time with the staff intensely doing this. We want to come to you with a plan, and it is going to require a continuing subsidy for the company for this year. There is no way that we can show you a bottom line, that we're going to make money, but we are seriously looking at what it's going to take to do that."

And so we did. We spent an incredible amount of time. Basically, then we made a major report—a business plan. It's in writing. I have copies of it. We gave him a copy of it. We met with him and gave him an oral report and, basically, he did not accept the plan. At that point, I think, he just was tired, because I was pushing him beyond where he wanted to go with this.

I was pushing him, and I was showing him what it was going to take for this company to make money.

Basically, (this was in like February or early March) he rejected the program department's business plan and decided to eliminate the program department. I mean, these were the people that were doing the business of ground handling for tours. And then he decided that my position would be eliminated effective April 10th, and that certain other people would go and certain people would stay.

We had hired a woman, Linda Wyckoff to be my financial administrator, and we were bringing the finances over into our office from his office. He had a very strong accountant named Gary Robison, a woman who has been with him forever, who really held total control over the money. In many ways, her rules were what you followed, period, regardless. She would veto expenditures, and there was constant problems between our company and Gary, and our saying that we needed to have full accountability for our own finances within our own company. He did hire Linda Wyckoff as a move in that direction, and she was excellent. She brought another dimension to the company that we badly needed, and she and I got along really well. But she was only there a few months, and then he basically decided he did not want me any longer, and so he called me in and told me so. Linda took over what was left, and he started really downsizing and doing it his way.

*What was your reaction when he told you? Did you know it was coming?*

Yes. Oh yes, yes. It was kind of whether I was going to go to him first or he was going to come to me first, you know, because this idea that I was really a figurehead and not able to deliver because I didn't have control over the pieces just was not satisfactory to me. He really rejected all the planning we did, and

we saw how it could work, but the manner in which it was going to work was not something he wanted to do. So he had every right to do what he did.

By that time, I was ready to move on if I wasn't going to be able to succeed at it. There again, I didn't want just a paying job to go to in the morning and come home at night.

*Without any feeling of success.*

Right, right. But he was very surprised in a way. He had fired many other people from this job. I had known some of them and had known that it was his style to just say, "Thanks, but now I have other plans." I think it would have happened sooner except that he had insisted that I stay at least two years. So he did remember that, and I stayed the two years. But the thing that shocked me is that he really did expect me to walk out the door, as of that day, April 10th, or whatever it was. There is no way that I was going to do that.

I had to bring closure to this position on behalf of the company. I mean, we were intimately involved in the tourism industry in northern Nevada, and I wasn't going to just walk away and have the word be, "Well, you know, Bill Thornton's fired one more." I knew I had done really good things there and I had established us in good ways throughout the industry. I said to him, "I need at least a month to bring closure to my relationship with this company, and it is in the best interest of this company that I do that,"—because I had established my own reputation for delivering on things, et cetera. He was not at all willing to do that at the beginning, and Linda Wyckoff really went to bat for me and said, "Look, this is the only proper thing to do."

And so for a month, I was basically sorting all my stuff out from his stuff and bringing my files home and writing a letter to all

the businesses we had done business with, thanking them for that relationship and trying to bridge the gap so that his company would not be hurt as a result. So I did all that for a month, and at the same time I'm looking at, "OK, what do I want to do next?"

*Yes. And your relationship with Bill—where did that go from there?*

Well, I would say it was strained at the end, but we are still—I won't say good friends—but we still communicate. He and his wife Barbara—we haven't talked about Barbara, who, of course, had nothing to do with this company. Barbara Thornton, I had known in a different context and she stayed out of our relationship, as she should have. But I knew Barbara well, and after I left and I went to the university, they together financially supported my starting of the Nevada Women's Archives. They were strong supporters and they have done other kinds of things to support me since. So I think that he continues to respect me for whom I am. I was not of value to him any more, at that point in time, for his own business reasons.

I think it was within six months that the business did close, and they tore the building down. So he was in the midst of looking ahead. He moved the gaming tour to another location, and we had already gotten the Bass Ticket Station into the Pioneer Center and Bill's company was running it, so he could drop some of the things. Well, he dropped everything except the gaming tour and Bass Ticket Station and basically went out of business.

We always were able to really talk very directly to each other, and I respect him for that, and he respected me for that. I pushed him in directions he did not want to go. I just showed him the realities of what it was

going to take to make that company work, and he didn't want that. He wanted to be able to continue to do it his way, and he had every right to do that. So there was a kind of mutual respect, and a sadness that some of the visions that we had didn't come to be. But it was time to move on, so we did.

*And so this came suddenly. Did you have a plan for what you were going to do next?*

Well, I didn't. And even though I was increasingly frustrated, because we had mounted this *major* master planning, business planning effort and then for him to basically turn it down. But I think he was already on his own track by then, thinking, "This isn't going to work for me and we need to get out of this and move on to other things." He let me play with this effort and kind of cut it short—by the time I was looking at how are we going to resolve all this, he settled that by giving me my notice.

I didn't have a plan, and I wasn't particularly panicky about it because, again, I had been making good money working for him and continued to live in Carson and was financially OK—not secure indefinitely, but I didn't have to run out and find a job right away.





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## ACTING DIRECTOR, UNR WOMEN'S STUDIES PROGRAM

And so, here I am again looking at what do I want to do? The university came up very highly in my mind, very quickly, because that had been the one area that I was also exploring when Bill and I agreed that I would go to work for him. I was looking at job openings at the university that weren't necessarily teaching positions, because I don't have a Ph.D. I knew that without the Ph.D. I couldn't teach for very long, but jobs in Continuing Education, jobs in administration—I had kind of been looking at that.

A good friend, Sandra Neese, called me and she knew what was happening with me and said, "I just learned that there is an opening on campus for someone to be Director of Women's Studies for one year. The search notice has gone out. The Director Elaine Enarson's husband has been transferred to Colorado and she has resigned, and so they're looking for someone to take her place."

I called and got that information. Sandra actually called President Joe Crowley, and I had been in touch with Paul Page, who is his

Vice President for Development. They were mounting a big capital campaign that they've just finished. They were just starting that. Actually, Bill Thornton and Paul Page were good friends, and when I went to work for Bill, I had been talking with Paul Page about a job on campus working under him. Bill knew that. My thought was to go *back* to Paul Page, even though there was a little bit of strain there because I was leaving working for Bill.

I called to see what was going on with them, and Sandra just decided I belonged on campus. I mean, she was just this incredible person, who started making every contact she could on campus, saying, "Do you know that Jean Ford is looking for a job? She belongs on campus. What kind of openings do we think we've got that she could fit?" She just started talking to everybody—deans and whomever. It was just incredible.

There was an opening in Continuing Education—a full-time opening for course planning, which is something I would have enjoyed doing a lot. I applied for that, and I never even got an interview. There were two

or three other positions there. Well then, I did apply for the Women's Studies position and was interviewed and was ultimately offered the position.

That didn't happen until June, so April and May were kind of throwing my hat in the ring, you know, writing a letter here and there. I wrote a letter to probably fifteen or twenty people round the state that I felt were in positions to know what I was capable of and what was out there and said, "Here is where I'm at and I want to stay in northern Nevada if I can. What's going on?" I started exploring.

I took a week and just left town. I went to Oregon and Washington and visited old friends in Oregon—Bob and Beverly Forson. He had been on the park commission and head of parks and recreation in North Las Vegas, and we had become close, personal friends. They now lived on a farm south of Eugene. I went and stayed about three days with them, then they took me to Portland where I caught the plane for Seattle where Maxine Peterson, who had been my partner in the tour company, came down from Port Townsend and picked me up. I went up and stayed with her another three or four days and just was a visitor/tourist and laid back. [laughter]

*Took a vacation.*

Right, took a vacation.

*Because you hadn't vacationed for quite some time—in the year that we're talking about—other than visits with your daughters?*

Right, so that was good.

Then the position with Women's Studies moved on to a point that they called me and offered me the position, which was a one-year Acting Director of Women's Studies, half-

time. That suited me fine, because I still had some other ideas about things I could do as a consultant, as an entrepreneur. Half-time was fine for one year.

I learned later that I was not their first choice—that they offered it to another person who turned them down, because half-time wasn't enough and she really wanted to pursue some other things. So she turned them down, and I was the second choice. So I have always been grateful to her (and I've told her so) that I got the job. [laughter] Linda White with the university Basque Studies Program was Chair of the committee that hired me.

At that point, Women's Studies had a committee that actually hired the Director, and it was a policy-making, administrative committee under the Vice President of Academic Affairs. So Women's Studies was an interdisciplinary program. That spring there had been quite a dialogue on campus about where Women's Studies should land in the future of the university, and it was determined that it should become a part of the College of Arts and Science. The other option was to go with the College of Human and Community Sciences, the one that Jean Perry is the dean of. It was a brand new college. There had been quite a bit of conflict. Both colleges wanted Women's Studies, and it ended up in Arts and Science.

This committee basically became a kind of an advisory committee instead of a policy-making committee. Its last act was to hire me as the part-time Director for one year, and I answered directly to Dean Ann Ronald. The committee then became advisory to me during that year, and Linda White continued on the committee that year. There were several other faculty on the committee.

I accepted the position in June. I started in July, and the office was in the University Inn and had been there for a year. The program

was evolving on campus. It had started in the early 1980s through the efforts of Anne Howard in the English Department and others who really team-taught "Introduction to Women's Studies" back then. Individual courses were taught that were related to Women's Studies, but it wasn't until the mid-1980s that the budget was approved for it be a minor.

Then their first staff person was hired as Director of the Women's Center and Women's Studies together. That was Dr. Elaine Enarson. She did that one year and resigned, saying it was impossible because those are two different worlds. The Women's Center's job is to be a support system for women on campus, where Women's Studies is academic learning around gender and women's relationship to society.

*Whereas the center is more of a drop-in facility?*

Right, it's more administrative, programmatic, but doesn't have anything to do with degrees. For a person to run both of those is really just impossible, so she resigned at the end of that year, and, in the meantime, had been cultivating support for the fact they needed to be split. The next year, they did split. She was hired then as the Director of Women's Studies, and Helen Jones was hired as the Director of the Women's Center. Both were then able to start functioning on a legitimate track within the university system. [laughter]

Elaine had had the position part-time and was an adjunct professor of sociology with the Sociology Department, as well. She did have a Ph.D. I guess she was in that position a couple of years, but she created everything that was there. She just did a wonderful job of getting things started. I had known her, not well.

She wrote a grant, which the Nevada Humanities Committee funded, to do a major project called "Movers and Shakers",

a photographic exhibit of Nevada women—actually three exhibits. One was, "Nevada Women and Their Families and Community." Another was, "Nevada Women in Politics." And another was, "Nevada Women and Work." She had an advisory board to help her design these exhibits and find old photographs and pull it together, and I was on that advisory board, so I met her through that. She had come not too long before that, so she wasn't an old-timer in terms of Nevada, but she jumped right in with both feet and got very involved in supporting women's issues. This grant from the Humanities Committee was just a fabulous project and resulted in three photographic panels that even today travel the state and can be ordered from the Nevada Humanities Committee. With the exhibits were three pamphlets which (they have gone out of print for the most part) were handed out along with the exhibit. It is just one of the best things we still have about the history of Nevada women.

I had gone up and met with Elaine when I knew the job was open. She reviewed with me what was involved, and then after I got the job I think I met with her once before she had to take off for Colorado. I kind of walked in the door with the key and here was my domain, I mean, with very little knowledge about what was going on. So I spent the summer—July and August—going through the files and trying to understand what the job was.

I also knew that I would be teaching "Introduction to Women's Studies" starting the end of August. I used her syllabus and the text that she had used and basically, as I say, stayed about a week ahead of the students and did it at the time she had scheduled it, which was a Monday, Wednesday, Friday for fifty minutes kind of thing, which was not the time frame that I did well in at all. I just could never tailor what I was doing to fifty minutes.

[laughter] We always ran out of time. So I learned that I needed to have the hour-and-a-half segments or even the three-hour block. I work much better in those.

As we know, that one year stretched into four and half, and it was again just a fabulous experience, and I just am so grateful for the opportunities that I had. What happened is that they let me basically do my thing, which is very unusual for a university campus, I might say after observing the system. [laughter] Part of that, I think, was the acknowledgment that I came with a background of experience in leadership, not in this particular job. I had earned the respect that I was competent to do what needed to be done.

*So you didn't need someone looking over your shoulder.*

Right. So the advisory committee just said, "Call me if you need help and go do it." Basically, Ann Ronald's office did the same thing. I was treated as a Department Chair, even though it wasn't a full-fledged department. It was a minor, but being treated as a Department Chair meant that I attended the Department Chair meetings of the College of Arts and Science and responded with all the administrative work—all those reports and everything that Department Chairs have to do. The budget was—apart from my salary—about \$3,000 a year for operating, and that actually was adequate for what was going on.

We didn't have to pay any rent for this space—basically what had been a hotel room. It was a perfect location for me. It was in a twenty-four hour hotel. I had my own rest room. I had a computer, a word processor. I had adequate materials and supplies. I ended up staying there often at night, because I was still living in Carson and if I had night meetings or early morning meetings, I tested

out the idea of sleeping on a futon in the office. That really worked and there was twenty-four hour service at the desk downstairs, so it was safe. It really worked for me.

I threw myself into learning what this job was all about, and the teaching of "Introduction to Women's Studies," which was just an eye-opener for me. I was now having to look at the theory behind women's relationships to men and to society and how patriarchy had evolved and all the things that you look at in "Introduction to Women's Studies." I had been living this in the real world, but not understanding why things happened the way they did. So for me it was just very much a growth period of reading and saying, "Oh, so that's what they are talking about."

Here I had been out there on the front lines for twenty years, so I brought to the classroom this mix of what the real world is all about and examples of the kinds of things that the textbooks talked about—Nevada examples of how those things worked or didn't work. I just really enjoyed, from day one, the opportunity to teach Women's Studies 101.

It was hard. I mean, I had never taught in the formal university setting. In my very first class, I had between fifteen and twenty. I think they were all women that class. I did have a few men later. But one of the women in this first class was a heckler. And, wow! Was that ever an experience. She about destroyed the class [laughter] before I was able to get a handle on how to deal with this.

*How did you deal with it?*

Well, I didn't deal with it very well. I kind of let her do it, and toward the end of the class I began to realize that what was going on wasn't fair. I became more assertive in shutting her up, I guess, but every class she would come



back with what her boyfriend thought we ought to do with all these topics that we were talking about. I mean, she was going home and clearing all of this with her boyfriend, and he didn't agree with the authors. She was just something else. [laughter] She was just one of these pushy, abrasive people that just was going to do it.

*Yes. And she would dominate the time?*

Yes, that's right. Oh, gee! [laughter] And so I look back at that first class and think, "Oh, those poor students!"

One of them was Rebecca Mannear, who was also my student assistant. She hung in there and actually graduated four years later and worked for me for four years. She majored in English and minored in Women's Studies, and she is now teaching down in Las Vegas. She said, "In spite of all that, it was a good class," so I guess I didn't totally turn people off. I learned a lot about how to manage my time and how to work with coed age, because I had worked mainly with adults before, although I had some older women in the class, too.

My other obligation was to teach a course of my choosing in the spring semester. Elaine had taught sociology type courses. And so I, of course, I had to make that decision early on in August-September, because that's when the spring schedules get put together. I talked to the Political Science Department, and they agreed that I could use the Political Science 354 course topic, which was "Politics and Women." I did teach that in the spring, and I designed my own syllabus for that.

By this time I had reconnected with Ruth Mandel at the Center for the American Woman in Politics. That was another really big thing about going into this job, was that I could reconnect with the Women's Movement, which I couldn't do with Dick Bryan and

which I didn't have time to do when working for Bill Thornton. I did some things around the edges. But here I was trying to make Bill's company work, and I just couldn't go off too far on tangents in the Women's Movement. Now at the university, it was part of my job.

I called Ruth and just said, "Hey, I'm here, what's going on?" And actually, they were right in the early stages of launching a major, major grant program, which then went on for four or five years, where they were inviting twelve campuses a year to send students to a leadership development institute in the summertime at Rutgers University. She just said to me, "Put in your letter of application."

I wrote a note to Joe Crowley and said we have this opportunity to be a part of this program, but it means that the campus has to pay the transportation of the students to Rutgers, but in return they get \$1,000 to bring back and use for programs on campus, and we have to mount a competition on campus. He turned it over to Pat Miltenberger [Vice President for Student Services]. They gave me support right away for that, and so right away we were connected with Rutgers University and this whole leadership program. I did take the two students the following June to Rutgers, and out of that came a whole big leadership program for students on campus that was just incredible.

I taught the course on "Women in Politics" in the spring, and then Eric Herzik, who was Acting Chair of the Political Science Department at the time, also knew of my background in public administration, and I asked about the possibility of teaching public administration courses for them. He thought that was a great idea, so in the spring I also taught a graduate course called "Women in Public Leadership" designed for middle management women in government. I did it in Carson City.

In that course, I brought in the top twenty women in state government, one by one, as guest speakers. Sue Wagner was, you know, in her real crisis stage of such pain and everything that she really could not come. This was after her airplane crash. But Attorney General Frankie Sue Del Papa, and Secretary of State Cheryl Lau and right on down the line; I just had every top woman. Some were legislators; some were managers. They came in as speakers, and we had a text on leadership, an excellent one called *The Challenge of Leadership* by Kouzes and Posner. The students interviewed the speakers, and each one was in charge of introducing a particular leadership person, so they got personal contact with them. We had a small group—about nine students, I think. It was just very successful. So, all of a sudden, I was really busy.

Now, the other thing that happened right at the same time that I took the job at the university is that Bonnie Buckley called me from the state library and said, “We have been running a program called the National Issues Forum, which is a national program that comes out of Kettering Foundation in Ohio. We’ve been doing it down here in Las Vegas, but it hasn’t been very successful in the north. We’re making a proposal to the Nevada Humanities Committee to do it another year, and we need a Project Director and would you consider doing that?” Well, this Project Director would be paid and it would be part-time, so that seemed to fit really well with the other piece of me, even though by now I was already working full-time. All these other courses, like the graduate course, I got paid under a separate contract. The “Women in Politics” course was part of my obligation to the contract I had. I also, that same spring, taught “Nevada Women on the Frontier” for the first time, and that they paid me extra for. So, in the spring I was teaching three courses, which when I look back, I just think, “Oh, my god!” [laughter]

*That’s a lot.*

That was huge. It was a huge load. I had never taught any of them before, you know.

*So all new courses, all new preparations?*

That’s right, that’s right. But see, I loved doing that. I’d been doing that in other frameworks for years. So it was just a matter of making it fit in the university system.

*So you were teaching three courses, running the Women’s Studies Program, and looking at becoming Project Director for the National Issues Forum.*

That’s right. Actually, that culminated in the fall at the same time I started teaching, 1991. I said, “Yes,” because the whole issue of organizing and sponsoring deliberative discussion around public policy issues was another thing dear to my heart. Actually, (let me think how this worked) there was a training institute at U.C. Davis in August of that year for people who were going to be running National Issue Forums in their own communities. So even before I started, I went to that training institute.

Humanities approved the project, and the library sent me to the training and it was so exciting; it was just excellent. There were probably a hundred people there from all over the country, mainly from California—academic types, community Cooperative Extension people, humanities people, community non-profit organization people—just all who were interested in this concept of deliberative discussion (not debate) on issues of public policy, and getting the public involved in making public policy, and connecting the public with the public officials that made the policy. All of this fit

with all the pieces of my life that I had lived on both sides.

My obligation that first year was to carry out X-number of forums. The National Issue Forum had three or four topics a year that they developed discussion booklets on that were national topics like the national debt, environment, the Bill of Rights, education—different topics of national interest. One of my first jobs was to have a training session for people to learn how to lead these discussions, and so I was able to connect with people I knew from other lives, but particularly people from Cooperative Extension. It turned out that this just really fit with some of their mission of building the capacity of people in local communities to take charge of their own lives and communities. This just fit beautifully with their work. Several Cooperative Extension people came to the training, including several of their administrators, and they just got hooked on it. One person in particular, John Cobourn, who was starting a new job with Cooperative Extension up at Lake Tahoe, he just got so excited about this that he's still using it. We became close friends and worked together for three or four years.

I had a National Issues Forum track, and I had a Women's Studies track, and those two continued parallel to each other for three years. At the end of the first year of Women's Studies, the search that they did resulted in their finding somebody they wanted, but she turned them down. At the end of the whole search process, here we were in June of the following year, and they still had nobody to do Women's Studies.

*Because this position you were in was Acting Director while they did the search to find someone?*

This was acting. Right. Right. They found somebody, but that person said no, finally, after she'd come and been interviewed, and

everybody thought it was a go. And so they said, "Oh, oh, my gosh. Can you stay another year?" I said yes, because I could. I mean, it fit with everything. I loved what I was doing. I was just getting into it, as a matter of fact. I was just realizing all the potential that was there. I'd created this whole leadership program on campus with the students. We'd gone to Rutgers, and oh, we just were connecting in all kinds of great ways. So it was a real boon to me to be asked to stay a second year. Well, just to follow that sequence through, that is the year that the bottom fell out of the university budget. There were even threats for awhile of their being asked to give money *back* to the state. I mean, it was so bad.

*This was 1992?*

1992, 1993. Dean Ronald decided there was no way they could even *start* a search, because there was no money to pay anybody. The money that they had hoped to use to pay a Women's Studies professor wasn't there.

*So when this person turned it down, they weren't in a position to even start a second search. Is that the situation?*

Well, as they got ready to do it the following year is when this whole budget crunch hit. So she called me in and said, "You know, the reality is that we can't even *do* a search this year, because there just is no money, and so will you make a two-year commitment?" I said, "Yes."

*So one year had now turned into three years.*

Now turned into three. Right. She did ask me that fairly early in that second year, so we just knew that the whole thing was static then as far as their doing a search.

That fall we came back from Rutgers, and the two students that went, who were really exemplary young leaders, had made a commitment to come back and make things happen on campus. That was part of the whole program, and they brought a thousand dollars back with them. Well, we decided that we wanted to create a miniature training institute, like the one we had attended at Rutgers, for other women on campus so they would get the same experience. So we developed a leadership retreat for women students on campus.

I also created an independent study class called “Women In Public Leadership” so that these students could get credit for doing all this work. There were six of them: the two that went to Rutgers and then four others that were just real eager to get involved in all this. With the six of them, we did an undergraduate version of what I’d done with the graduate students, but we’d use the same leadership text, and then *they* could spend X-number of hours a week working on running this leadership retreat—designing it—and then we’d come back and talk about it in class. Otherwise, there was no time.

They organized this whole retreat, which we had on Nevada Day weekend that fall. We had twenty women. I mean, we took applications from women all over campus, and we actually ended up accepting them all. We raised \$3500 by going to Soroptimists and other people. The students raised money to pay all the bills of getting this set of condos up at Incline Village for two nights.

We planned this whole leadership retreat, and we got professional career specialists and faculty women on campus to come. We planned the whole agenda around leadership development. The third day, we left Incline Village at breakfast time and came to Carson. We had our own t-shirts that said “Women Leaders of Nevada”, and we watched the

Nevada Day parade on the steps of the Attorney General’s office and then went to all the things you do on Nevada Day: you know, Dick Bryan’s chili feed, the capitol, the Brewery Arts Center. We ended with a party here at my house, and it was just an incredible weekend for these students and faculty that came.

Out of that came a group—Women Leaders of Nevada—that continued to function for a couple of years. Right at the time I came, there were two students—one was Rebecca Mannear; the other was Sherry Helvie—who were really close friends that were freshmen that year. They were very politically active and aware, and they wanted to create a group, which they ultimately called Women’s Political Action Network. It was all their idea; they had started working on that, and then I connected with them. I ended up becoming their advisor, and then we created the Rutgers Connection. Out of this came several student projects that related to women in leadership that Sherry and Rebecca were the main leaders of, but more women got involved like Buffy Martin and others whose names I can’t come up with at the moment. There just became a real activist group of women on campus that were very good at leading, and so it was just perfect.

I was able to connect them with the community. Oh, I know. That was a lot of it. What I brought was something that they just hadn’t had at all, which was a *really* strong connection with the community. The fall of 1992 the Women’s Political Caucus was having a convention up at Lake Tahoe, and they sent scholarships to us. They said, “We can take up to six students. Can you find six students that want to come?” So I brought these students and they connected with the whole world of the Women’s Political Caucus. That was the year that Miriam Shearing was running for Supreme Court and some of these students started working on

her campaign. One of them got flown down to Las Vegas on election night for the election victory party. They just got involved in all these community things and that was just very exciting for them. And, of course, the community groups like the Caucus and A.A.U.W. and others were delighted to meet a connection with live young students that were coming up. I just became a real link between the community and the Women's Studies Program that it had never had, because Elaine was an academic, and she was concentrating more on that end of it.

*That was one of the things that, when we first met and got to know each other, always struck me—how well you could connect people that you knew from different parts of your life and keep track of who was interested in what and how they could work together. This was one of those examples.*

Right. Right. [laughter] Right. And that really started coming together there at the university for me, in that it was a mixture. The National Issue Forum was also at the same time I was managing *that* program and it was getting bigger than life. I mean, it really took off. The second year Cooperative Extension gave like \$10,000 to the budget, and the Humanities Committee renewed its grant. I had like a \$23,000 budget just for the Issue Forum the second year. We took the issue of water, and we researched and designed our own discussion booklet around water in Nevada. We had thirty different discussions go on around the state, and I trained the people who led those. We ended up the following spring taking the results of all those discussions to the Governor and the Legislature, and so that was moving on another but related track. It still had to do with leadership development. I found myself *really* into leadership development in a really big way.

The administrative part of Women's Studies was manageable. It was all some of the painful parts of being in a bureaucracy and having to write reports and do those things. The Department Chair meetings I did not enjoy at all. I began to see the university system from the inside.

I must say that [laughter] it allowed me to do wonderful things, but it was a unique situation for me. They basically left me alone, because nobody wanted to deal with what I was doing, particularly, and by their leaving me alone, I was in a unique position; I truly was my own boss. I had a budget and an office, and I had a student assistant, and I could run with it.

I created all these opportunities for student leadership. I got a grant that the university put out—faculty enhancement grants. I wrote a proposal for \$5,000 to sponsor faculty dialogues on how to integrate women's leadership into mainstream courses. You know, how could the whole issue of women in public leadership be handled in a political science course, or a philosophy course, or a sociology course? Because that is the goal—to mainstream the whole question of women's studies and the role of gender and the role of women into *all* academe.

*So there's not a separate women's studies, but it's an incorporated part of all studies?*

That's right. That is a major goal of women's studies nationwide and the Women's Movement. If it's only going to be taught in women's studies, forget it. The kind of people you impact, the number and the manner in which they are impacted, is so minuscule that you're not going to make the kind of transformation that we really need to make in our society, of respect for people not based on stereotypes but based on who they are and what they're all about.





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UNIVERSITY BUREAUCRACY

*So you were really able to move forward towards these goals. Was that not typical on campus? You started to talk a little bit about the bureaucracy on campus.*

No. OK. I got this faculty enhancement grant which enabled me to do real exciting things, and faculty came that were hungry for this kind of thing. Let's see, how can I describe it? Because I wasn't working on this whole business of working toward tenure—I wasn't going to be around for the long haul—somehow I was free to do a lot of things that otherwise I couldn't have. The system itself, I think, is extremely stifling. The elitism that exists on the university campus is just incredible.

*Can you describe or maybe give an example or say more about that?*

Well, it's just this whole attitude that university people are special, that they get there in a special way through tenure, and once they have tenure you can't touch them.

They are allowed to do "their thing," and that can be good or bad. I've seen examples of both good and bad. I can see the value of tenure, and I see the down side of tenure. I saw many examples of professors who basically were living a really pretty cushy life, and were doing what they wanted to do when they wanted to do it, and it didn't have a lot to do with helping the mission of the university move forward, in my opinion. I mean, there is dead wood.

I was there when Dr. Hoover was the Academic Vice President, and he was a *major* push toward some reform in this area of making professors more accountable and developing role statements—for every professor, every year to have a role statement. What are my priorities for this year? How am I going to balance teaching and service and research?

The attitude on campus of the majority—that teaching and research are, by far, more important than service—to me is really bad. Service to the community is just put down as—for those who want to spend their time doing that, that's a really soft kind of

contribution. They pay within the system of promotions and perks, if they're not playing the game of publishing and moving up, going for tenure and all the things one has to do to get it.

*So service easily can fall to the bottom of the list of priorities?*

It does. And there are people on campus who think differently, but the mainstream—the majority of people—really agree with that. Now, I was *appalled* at the evidence I had of that attitude in the Department Chair meetings and in the leadership retreats that Joe Crowley sponsored, and Dr. Hoover, for all faculty to come together, which they had a couple of times a year. The resistance to that by faculty—of being told *anything*—is just incredible.

As a former legislator, I just thought, “Wow!” As someone who's used to being accountable to the public at large, the university is shooting itself in its foot, big time, if it insists that service is not an important element, because look how much money the university gets out of the state budget, and to feel that it doesn't have an obligation to turn around and connect with the real world is ridiculous. And that's exactly the attitude. They want to be left alone to play their own games in their own little ivory tower and think that everybody ought to be real happy that they're doing it, and no one should question anything they're doing.

We would get these things we had to fill out on the use of our time, because legislators are asking for accountability. And, I mean, they would just argue and grumble among themselves and speak ill of anyone who dared to question how professors were using their time. If I'd still been in the Legislature, there were several times I just felt like I wanted

to get up and say, “Hey, you guys, you're not living in the real world, and you're not realizing the decisions legislators have to make about money. I mean, and you don't *have* to get this money. There are other places it could go and maybe serve better.”

*Did you ever say that?*

No, I never did that, but I sure thought it. Oh, gosh! It was just that the attitude that they're untouchable is really prevalent.

So very early in that first year, I really liked what I was doing. I really liked being on campus. I liked the experience of teaching, so I did think about what would it take to be able to stay, and what it would take would be working on a Ph.D. That became real clear real quick—that without the Ph.D., I could not apply for any teaching position, any openings like in a department or anything.

I thought briefly about doing that—very briefly—[laughter] *because* I just was at a point in my life where I felt I knew what I could bring to the table; I knew what I had to offer. I knew what my strengths were by now, and I knew what I could deliver. I was doing it in all kinds of exciting ways that year. From the time I arrived on campus, I hit the ground running with all kinds of extraordinary things and connections, and the response of the students was great and everything. I thought, “Why should I have to go jump through the hoops of a Ph.D.,” which sounded like it meant two or three years of absolute groveling at the feet of some committee that would want to give me a hard time while I did a dissertation on something that may or may not matter [laughter] to the world. Why should I go back and do all that? Surely there are things I can do without having that Ph.D. that enable me to use the talents that I have. It's kind of

time-out while you go do this, and I didn't like the feeling; I didn't like becoming a part of that system. It's like going back to Santa Fe [laughter] and our deciding very quickly we didn't want to live in Santa Fe because of the "haves" and the "have-nots." I would never have fit into the university bureaucracy of bowing down to those who have the power in order to get something. I don't like the feeling that goes on.

*Were there comparisons to the state government system?*

Oh, absolutely. It's a different system, but it's the same result; it's stifling to people. In order to really be creative, there are probably more opportunities in the university to overcome that than there is in state government, depending. In state government, the key is who is Governor and what team is he putting around him. So that can change, and that could become very positive very quickly with the right Governor.

At the university, the system is a huge, intricate system, and there are very creative people doing creative things. One can carve out their niche, but they have to pay first. They have to play the game to get to a point where they can be their own boss, or they can write the kind of research grants they want, or they can do innovative programming. They have to have jumped through all the hoops first.

*And those hoops are the tenure hoops, basically?*

It's tenure; it's politics—just plain old interpersonal relations politics, people who have turf issues, people who abuse power. It's all of those things. Plus, as people like the Legislature *do* insist that the university become more accountable, then the tension becomes even greater because of the time it

takes to institute the accountability kinds of things that people don't want to spend the time on. But it's their own fault because they have snubbed their nose at the Legislature in the past and the public in general.

*I know accountability in education is a big issue in the K through twelve grades right now, but is that still an issue with the university system or only when the Legislature comes to budget items, would you say?*

The Legislature, what it does can have an impact the year round. The current chancellor's office seems really interested in pulling things together in a positive way and has established good relations with the Legislature. I don't know the current chancellor, so I don't know how much of that is trying to get the Legislature off their backs so they can go do their own thing, and how much of it is truly recognizing the value of accountability.

But those times in 1993, 1994, in there, when the money wasn't there, and they were having to even cut back, and Department Chair meetings would be meetings where they were talking about how to cut money out of budgets, oh, they were mad. They were mad, and they didn't see the bigger picture at all. So the two definitely are examples of bureaucracies at work. Again, the corporate world, I'm sure, has the same kind of thing, which I've not experienced in a large corporation at all.

*Yes. And you said something interesting. Maybe we could talk about that a little bit—that with the state government, whether it was stifling to creativity or not, would depend on the right Governor. And we'd also talked earlier about the issue of Governors who were good policy makers versus Governors who were good*

*administrators, and is there a connection with all of these areas?*

Yes, I think so. And, you know, people generally don't see that. They just see a political role that one gets elected to and they don't really sort out what the job is. Certainly people don't vote for people based on whether they're the best person with specific skills for that job. [laughter]

*Their skills in terms of applying the job?*

Right, but the jobs are *quite* different. To be in the Legislature, to be in the U.S. Senate or the Congress is a policy-making position, is much more dealing with policy issues—developing statements of policy that then are put into law—than developing, to some degree, the administrative mechanism by which that will be carried out. But it isn't carrying it out. It isn't being on the firing line day after day.

Policy making is a much more protected job. You can make the policy maybe two or three years before anyone ever gets around to looking at how it's working or whether the policy was good or bad. It's the concept—it's the perception of whether we need this kind of policy, and if so, what should it be, how much clout should it have—that the policy maker works on. And they can be working on, of course, many of these at one time. They are being pressured by special interest groups who *know* the effects of that policy getting into law and regulation and all of that, but still, it's a much more protected role. I mean, it's easier to be the legislator. You don't make nearly as many enemies.

For one to be good at it requires a kind of analytical mind and to be familiar with some of the issues that we're dealing with, of what works now—just your knowledge of the

issue and the background, or a willingness to be briefed on it and try to comprehend the trade-offs involved in arriving at policy. But it's going to be some time before the policy gets tested, so from that angle is why I say, politically, it's an easier job.

Now, that has changed maybe in the last ten to fifteen years because of the role of money in running for public office. The positions that special interests want out of policy makers, they go for those now, at the time they're giving the money, to help them get their name before the public. So it's tougher now because they want commitments. An example might be: if we give you \$10,000 for your campaign, then we want it pretty clear from you that you're going to vote on the side of management when it comes to air quality, or you're going to vote on the side of the industry, or something like that. All shades of that are going on.

*As early as the campaign?*

Right. Very definitely. No one is just getting blank checks, like the time that I got the money from Harrah's, and they take me to lunch and they say, "We just believe in good government and we want good people, and we think you're a good person, so we want to give you \$300." We didn't discuss any policy question or issue, but they were buying access to me later in the session. Certainly, if a note that John Gianotti had called me was in a mixture with twenty-five other notes from people that I didn't know, you can be sure that I would call John Gianotti back, not necessarily to agree with him on something, but he would have access; he would know that he could get to me.

So that whole issue from being bought, which I think happens to some extent in the campaign process, to a very broad delivery



of money with the idea that we just want to make sure your quality of person is there, is really part of the reality now of running. It really does muddy the waters in terms of how independent people can be once elected to make policy the way *they* feel it ought to be made and not be doing it based on the pressure of who gave money in the campaign. That's very real.

*So you don't just have a policy maker who is elected because they have a good analytical mind and they can think through how things should be; they're getting this outside pressure from the special interests?*

Oh, right. Right. In reality, the people that do get elected to be policy makers, some are really good at that analytical thing and they love chewing on the issues and looking at the trade-offs.

*And who would be examples of that?*

Dick Bryan would be a good example of that. He was excellent in the Assembly and the Senate from that angle and liked working with the public—made sure the public knew. And then, Paul Laxalt, I would say, is another good example, who was never, I don't think, in the state Legislature but went on to be in the U.S. Senate. In many ways he *took* to chewing on the policies and working on this whole world of policy making, much more so than what the job really was to run state government. I think those are both good examples of people who had great minds and who liked the policy end and who liked connecting with the world of policy makers and staff.

*And carrying out policy would be, for example, an administrative type of skill for the Governor?*

Right. The Governor is an administrator. The Governor makes almost no policy. The Governor has some leeway about hiring and can hire staff that's unclassified. So the Governor can put his or her people in, that they think are going to be loyal to them and do good jobs. They don't have to come through the personnel system, which ideally ought to deliver them good people but we know sometimes doesn't, and the seniority system doesn't always give you the best person. So the Governor has quite a bit of leeway in appointments of people, but in reality, his job is to see that the law is administered—is carried out—that each of the departments are organized in an efficient manner to do what the law says they ought to be doing and within the budget that the Legislature approved. It is a real “nuts and bolts, deliverer of product” kind of thing. It requires *really* understanding systems; how people relate to each other and how people can deliver a product just like the business world. Here we are talking public administration. That's exactly what we're talking about—personnel, finance, community relations, all those elements.

Then you have the institutions, you have the agencies that deliver service, you have the agencies that regulate all of this based on a *law* that the Governor did not make, but has to carry out successfully. That's a totally different kind of job.

*Do Governors typically have both skills, as policy maker and administrator? Can you give an example of someone who's a good administrator but may not be as strong on the policy, analytical end?*

Yes, well, I think both Laxalt and Bryan were weaker in the skills of being Governor than O'Callaghan, for instance. First of all, they were good policy makers. They

were quite different philosophically, so I'm not trying to say people who move more toward liberal are better, because Paul Laxalt certainly was a conservative. I just think he was good at that. I don't think he liked being Governor, and he went out into the business world for awhile and then ended up running for the U.S. Senate. I don't think he liked the administrative job of being Governor. It's lots of personnel issues, starting with your own staff. Personnel is just *huge*. The personnel system and then making agencies fit within their budgets and making agencies talk to each other and communicate and do what they need to do to coordinate what they're doing.

*And that's where Mike O'Callaghan was very strong?*

O'Callaghan, whose background was administration, who actually had been a federal administrator in the region—I think for job training, Job Corps, or one of those—he *thrived* on that. He understood that he was running like a company; he was running a state government. Again, the Governor can't begin to do it by himself. It takes a team of people, and it takes working with people when you have no choice. I mean, there's a *ton* of people you have no choice about in the personnel system. All the classified personnel, you take them whether you like them or not. The Governors can add unclassified people at the top, so that the Governor ought to be able to have a key person in there heading up that department, someone he can trust and believes is competent to do the job. That person then is responsible for making the agency work, just like I was in that position.

I don't think Governors think very much at all about: Does this person have the *skills* to be an administrator of a department? They

think more about: Do I owe this person a favor? Are they going to be loyal? Which is very important, but you also need people who have some experience and knowledge in handling people, in running agencies. It could come from the corporate world and the non-profit world; it doesn't have to come from inside state government because the techniques are all basically the same. When I worked on my master's in public administration, it was offered at UNLV as a joint offering of the political science department and the business school, because personnel systems are personnel systems, whether it's in the corporate world or state government. Now there are differences, but there's lots of commonalities in succeeding in handling personnel, and the same with all kinds of other basic jobs of managing.

*Sure. So then from your experience—now that we've kind of talked about these two separate skills—from your experience, which type of Governor allows the kind of creativity that makes for good government, which you felt you didn't have?*

Oh, it could be either. I mean, the creativity end of it is kind of over and above anything else.

*It's not a result of the wrong person being in. For example, the wrong person being Governor because they maybe are not strong on administrative skills? It's more a personality thing?*

Well, let's see. That's interesting. I hadn't thought about that. I guess what we're saying is that whoever goes into being Governor needs to, first understand what the job is, and then whether they are good administrators or not, I would hope they would accept the value

of creativity in the workplace—in people being able to use creativity to do their job. A Governor would need to then have staff around him that accepted that. They weren't going to just say, "Follow the dotted line. I want no surprises. Don't get out of line. This is what the job says. Do this and don't do anything else. Don't come to me with grandiose ideas. Just do what you have to do that's accurate, and keep within your budget,"—you know, and these kinds of things.

*Yes. Yes. Yes. [laughter] "And don't come to me with solutions to problems."*

Yes, right, right, right! And so any Governor could be a good Governor by understanding what his job is, and there's no training for that, by the way. The National Governors Association does now, I think, have an institute for new Governors that come in right after the election, and they get together for a week or something, and they get briefed by all kinds of people, and that's good. But basically, it's a political position. One gets there through whatever . . . well, like Kenny Guinn [laughter] now is running for Governor having not held any elected position. He can't point to a track record of experience. However, he clearly has been an administrator, more so than a policy maker, so whatever that brings.

It's just that the team, the type of staff they bring together, is just incredibly important. What they tell that team then, *how* they want that team to represent them with the entire staff of state government. It starts at the top, and if they want the government to truly serve people, they want every department to look at: How do they serve people? And how can they do it in a positive manner? And how can they have a minimum of obstacles in doing that? And how could they do it better? And

how could they do it more efficiently? That's what, hopefully, a Governor would want, and that's hard work. That is going to take a lot of time to deal with it, and it's easier in a way to just say, "Follow the line."

*Toe the line, yes. If that's true in government, is that also true in the university system, that it starts at the top with an attitude of serving the people?*

Absolutely. Absolutely.

*And so, how would you assess, for example, the university at Reno, or does it start even higher up at the chancellor's office?*

Well, yes, it starts with the chancellor and the Board of Regents. Hmm . . . I don't really feel expert enough to make a big judgment. [laughter] Again, my observation of Joe Crowley is that he has allowed a lot of good things to happen under his administration as President, so I think he's open to change. I did not have a lot of personal contact with him. I had quite a bit of contact with Pat Miltenberger, who wasn't simply Vice President for Student Services, but that connected because the Women's Center is under her, and she also was asked by Joe Crowley to coordinate some things for me.

And Hoover, who was the Academic Vice President, who came in while I was there and then left while I was there to go become President of a college in Idaho—he was a real mover for change. I, personally, felt the things Hoover tried to make happen were very good, and again, it was a person exercising leadership, and Joe, obviously, had to agree with him for him to be able to do it. He was trying to exercise real leadership in moving the university toward having more balance, with service and community combined with

academic teaching and research. He met incredible resistance to that, and I saw that resistance in the College of Arts and Science from the dean on down . . . I mean, just almost overwhelmingly! They truly wanted to be left alone to teach and do research, and *no* one should question the quality or the manner in which that was going to be done.

But then there are codes. There are policies within the university system that they work on forever at the regents' level, and then each campus has a master plan. There's just an *incredible* amount of small print that tells people what they can and can't do, and you have the forces at work trying to maneuver that in the direction they want. You have the classified people within the university system; they do have job protection in the classified service—the secretaries and the rest. You have the faculty which have their own political arm on campus, and then you have the Association of University Professors which is a union, basically, that has people like Jim Richardson, I believe, representing it at the Legislature and at the Board of Regents. Then you have student associations, so again, you have all of these *pieces* that make up the university system that are creating their own groups for self-interest within that system. It just takes a tremendous amount of leadership to cut through all of that to make something good happen.

It's complex. That's the way it is. I'm not saying that we could do away with all that. All of that is important, but just the role of personal leadership is *very* key. I mean, people that can motivate others in the direction of problem solving and the direction of good products for money spent; [laughter] just some basic principles, I guess, of delivery of service to the taxpayer and being willing to try innovative ways of doing it and making quality of performance a high priority.

What is this all about when you get down to the bottom line? And I guess that's what I'm talking about is creating community, making these elements of government, like the university and state government, serve the people of Nevada so that we have safe communities in which individuals can develop their own potential. That's what I think it's all about. And government does play a critical role in this, there's no question. And it *should* play a role. To what *degree* that role should be, how much tax should be levied to deliver service—that type of thing—will be argued from now until the end of time.

*But that's a good analysis of the various segments and elements that go into it, and how it does take strong leadership to pull all that together in a way that serves the people, and that's an issue that's been one of your passions since you started back with the League.*

Yes. Right. Actually, looking at leadership and what does leadership mean, it's just very key. No matter where I am, it will come forward and then, ultimately, I ended up teaching courses in leadership. Not that I have the answers. In these leadership classes, I don't stand up there and lecture the whole time. It's an exploring together. I've found some really good resources that I think are worth using as a basis of discussion, but then it's really the class developing together what it thinks, and that's always been my style. That was another thing that I loved.

#### DEVELOPING WOMEN'S STUDIES

I just found the whole Women's Studies approach to teaching is just wonderful, and it ought to be used by every faculty on the

campus. I mean, Women's Studies has so much to bring to education as a whole, and part of it is the pedagogy used—the style of teaching begins with students and professor sitting in a circle, a more collaborative approach.

I tell every class that what I have designed for you in the syllabus is a structured journey. My job is to take the topic that we have said we're teaching in this course, that is the area of focus, and to create a manageable path—a plan—where over the course of about fourteen weeks, we move from introduction to conclusion. My style is going to be a mixture of lecture, visual aids, discussion, but also from much more of their questioning. So that is somewhat Socratic, but I don't do simply a Socratic method.

*You do a combination.*

Right. That we're going to learn together, and what's going to come out of this is something that neither of us knows yet at this point. I'm there as a facilitator, and I've provided how we're going to divide the topics up and what kind of papers they're going to work on that show me that they're working on it, and what kind of end-product are we aiming toward. That's what my syllabus is, and I'm going to be there every time to facilitate what happens. But it's really up to *them* to learn.

*Right. You say that you don't know where you're going to end up with each class. Have the end results surprised you? Have you come up with some exciting things?*

Oh, just incredible. I mean, yes. Just the number of people that I know the classes have had a positive impact on are just incredible. It has worked. It's been so rewarding to do that

and to have students come back and take more classes because I'm the one teaching them—that's just been real rewarding. Plus, they have talked about how it has made them grow. They have had to take charge of their own learning, and they have grown as people, and they have found whole new areas of interest that they didn't have before.

The pedagogy of Women's Studies across the country is what I'm talking about, starting with, for instance, sitting in a circle as opposed to an auditorium-style room arrangement. Now, obviously, in a major lecture course, you can't do that. You can't do it much beyond twenty people. But I was fortunate that I had courses of those sizes.

Sitting in a circle, people are human. People get to know each other as people. They get to know the professor as a person. The syllabus is the structured journey through a particular area of learning. We're all going to grow out of it. We're going to disagree on theories and concepts, but we're going to respect each other's right to think. Creating a safe environment where people can share is a very big part of Women's Studies, and it's also criticized highly by those who look at it as a real "touchy-feely" kind of thing. And there is "touchy-feely" in it if it's done right. Particularly "Introduction to Women's Studies," where it's the first time some people have ever looked at women as individuals in their own right. It's the awareness of how people start thinking about, "What's the first time I realized that I was a woman and that being a woman was different in how I was going to be treated?"

You start talking about that in a classroom, and you get some interesting insights. Some people have never thought about it until that point, but you do end up getting emotions come to the fore to some degree; but you don't let that take over. And that's where . . .



*That's where you provide the safety?*

Right, that's where the structured journey is. It doesn't wind up in just a glorified rap session. So it takes some skills in trying to keep a balance between academic learning and the practicality of the real world and everything else.

I really found the right place to do that. I really hit on that, and I brought some strengths to that, and I learned some new skills that enabled me to provide, I think, a really good combination of all that in the classroom. So it just became *very* rewarding for me to be teaching courses. And, of course, the most exciting one was "Nevada Women on the Frontier", which I designed from scratch.

An observation I should make here: I'm used to giving a *lot* for my time and energy. Again, you get into either state government or the university system and dealing with that whole thing that you don't want to break the norm, because if you work too much better and too much faster than the next person, then you change the median, and everybody has got to work faster and smarter. Well, people don't like that, you know. [laughter] A lot of people don't like that. I've always been that way. I'm going to deliver a certain quality with what I want to do, no matter if I work overtime, or whatever.

I brought this idea of "Nevada Women on the Frontier" to the Women's Studies advisory board, and this whole concept that I wanted one credit to be the field trip on a bus. I had this whole idea. They looked at me, and I remember Duncan Aldrich who was on the board from the university library staff, looked at me and said, "What you're talking about is a several hundred thousand dollar grant. You ought to write a proposal to somebody to get a several hundred thousand dollar grant to do this." And, in the scheme of the things

of a university world, you know, that *is* often what people do. I did it for nothing. I mean, I did it on my own time. [laughter] I got paid \$2,000, I think, to do the course that spring.

I organized the tour. I took people on the tour. I did what he legitimately said for many other people would have been a full-blown project—that they would have to get paid by somebody else to do. I did it, you know, because I wanted to do it. I got paid to teach the course, but all the extra stuff I just did, because that's what it took to make that particular course work. Then it worked so well that I taught it five times, and it was different every year because I learned from the students what made it a better course. I took them in different directions and all that.

So anyway, my experience at the university was just very, very positive, because I was basically left alone to do my thing. And that resulted in being able to teach a lot of really interesting classes and developing and working with student organizations on campus.

*I had two questions. And one is to talk about some specific projects that some of your students came out of the courses with, that were surprising or interesting or helpful later on. And then also to talk a little bit about the new skills that you learned. You said you learned some of them from your students. I think those two things would be interesting to cover.*

OK. One of the things I did was require students to make a presentation of their reports. They were graded on their written report, but not on their performance, because I wanted to encourage them to explore new methods of presentations. What I found was that students would get turned on and continue their work after the course. For example, from one course that I taught in

Carson City, the students chose to create costumes and make Chautauqua-style presentations. Six students continue to do this for their own organizations, on their own, and have gone on to do additional research on their costumes and characters.

Then starting with “The Nevada Women on the Frontier” class, that was my opening to consciousness-raising about the lack of women’s history. I had been interested in Nevada history by my travels through the state and the history of women, not really to any degree more than just general history, but I knew I wanted a history component to that class. I’m not an historian by training, so I thought, let’s have the students each do a woman in Nevada history to bring back to the class, so we get some footing on what was going on before us.

The whole purpose in the class was to raise the question: Is there still a frontier? And if so, what kind? So we were learning about Nevada as a place—our sense of place—how we relate to Nevada. And people like Elizabeth Raymond, Will Shepperson, Jim Hulse and others had done some great writing about Nevada and sense of place, and how we as Nevadans fit or don’t. I did an anthology of readings that the students would use. Some of it had to do with Nevada and then some of it had to do with women. I had them do a research project at the beginning on the history of a woman; a research project at the end on current-day women; and one area of focus like mining, or religion, or ranching or arts. And so we were all over the place. [laughter]

For the history part, I went to Special Collections, and I asked them to give me a list of the women that the students could research—meaning that there were either books written about them or papers about them. They came back to me with a list that

was shorter than the number of students I had in the class. Now, they had more women than that in their collection, but I was asking for this northwest quadrant of the state to be the area of focus. I was asking for people that were deceased, that there was enough information about them that they could pull together kind of a history—a life history. Using those parameters, they didn’t have much.

Then they started saying, “Well now, there are some oral histories that you could use,” and they started looking at some other sources of information. That was my beginning of looking at: What do we know about women in our own history? And through what sources do we know that?

I went ahead and I used their list, and then we started adding to it as we became aware of other resources. That was the spring of 1992. By the end of that semester, I had gone back to Special Collections and said, “We have to do something about this. What would you think if we mounted a campaign to find papers about Nevada women? Either women that are deceased, that the papers are in their homes, or people that are still living. At least the next generation will know what was going on with women of this era.”

I spoke with Susan Searcy [Archivist II and Project Director for the Nevada Women’s Archives] first, who spoke with Bob Blesse [Head of Special Collections for the University of Nevada, Reno library], and then came back to me and said, “We think that’s a great idea.”

See here, I was still working half-time on campus, although I was doing this Issue Forum thing, which was really taking up a lot of my time. But I said that I was willing to work on collecting papers, particularly if we could raise some money to pay me to travel. For instance, if I needed to go out and call on people, I was making enough money from all

these contracts and everything that I didn't need more money to live; I was just looking at what it would take to make the project work.

The idea of the Nevada Women's Archives was developed right then. Actually, Susan wrote up a position paper on that concept and it was approved up the line. The initial money that we got, so that I could go out and start gathering papers, was from Maya Miller and Barbara Thornton. I personally approached both of them and just told them where I was at and my vision of what needed to be done. They both were just really supportive. And then other money came. Rollan Melton really thought this was a great idea from the very first day, and he called Susan one day and said, "I've got you a \$5,000 grant from the John Ben Snow Trust." That was totally unsolicited by us, and he has connections with that particular source.

Then I started gathering papers, and we created the advisory board and started sending out a letter to all kinds of potential donors of papers—and mainly women who had been in office because they were easiest to identify and they were the ones I knew.

Although I started with the idea of women in politics, I'll be forever grateful to Barbara Thornton, because in meeting with her, she said, "Well I really like this idea, but I can tell you that I do not want it limited to women in politics—that if I'm going to support it, it has to be broader than that." And, you know, she was right. It was out of that that we brought in Ollie Walters's diary, who had not much to do with women in politics.

*And she was a ranch wife in the Yerington area. Yes.*

Right, right. By this fall of 1992, the Women's Archives was a reality. We had about, I don't know, \$3,000 or \$4,000 to start with,

and we could use it for me to travel or the postage for the mailings. We created a special fund at Special Collections, and then people started donating. In our letter we offered them the opportunity to donate money, and some people sent back checks.

At that point I reached out to southern Nevada, as well, because that's where many of these people were, of course, that had these papers. The situation at the university library down there was not good. There was no Director of Special Collections at that point in time, and there hadn't been for about a year. And the Dean of Libraries was retiring. There just was nobody on campus in the library system that cared about this kind of thing. I even started bringing some of the papers from southern Nevada up here, because there just was no evidence they would ever get taken care of down there.

Well, of course, that got some people's attention in the history department who did care about women's history, and so ultimately, within the next year, things had changed down there dramatically. There was a new Dean of Libraries, Matt Simon, and I met with him. He was very supportive of my concept of the Nevada Women's Archives. They hired a Director of Special Collections, Peter Michel, who had experience from Missouri. They hired Carol Corbett, who was a part-time archivist, to start processing collections, which they had had there for ten years or so and nothing had ever happened to them—they were just sitting in boxes. So we were able to generate a lot of interest down there.

The history department was very supportive. Dr. Joanne Goodwin was the main person. She and Gene Moehring of the history department really went to the Dean of Libraries and said, "We will even put graduate students in work-study on learning how to process papers, if you will take this

on at the library.” So, the Nevada Women’s Archives began then at both campuses, and that continues today.

There have now been several hundred collections brought in—I’d say probably 500 total—both north and south. This can range from just a few pages about a person to thirty-five or forty cubic feet about a person. Some of them are quite extensive, and most of them have been processed, because then the UNR library applied to the state for a federal grant to take this a couple of steps further. The state committee is chaired by Guy Rocha, the State Archivist, and the grant is from a group called the National Historic Records Preservation Committee, or something like that. They got the grant, and that enabled me to go to work for them for pay, because every year I was looking at leaving the Women’s Studies job. I found that I really wanted to continue on the women’s history, that I really had found a home. I wanted to continue doing that. So working part-time for the university library on a grant to go gather papers and inventory—which was the next stage, was to inventory what else was out there in the state—really fit my interest totally.

By this time, I also now realized that I had enough years that I could retire within the state system, the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS). That my combination of work for the Clark County Library for eighteen months, then my work for state government for four and a half years, and now my work for the university was all adding up to enough years to be vested to be eligible for retirement. [laughter] When I first went to the university, it was with the idea I was going to be there a year, so all of a sudden this began to look *really* good, that I could even get some retirement out of this if I continued to work for the system.

The Women’s Studies did another search in the third year, which also was unsuccessful.

[laughter] They skipped the second year, which was the bad money time. OK, the third year, they did another search and they found somebody, and the person turned them down. In both of these instances, it was people who, in the final analysis, wanted their husbands or partners guaranteed jobs if they came. In one case, it was a partner; in the other case, it was a husband—that they wanted a guaranteed job on campus. The university, in both instances, felt they could not do that.

When it happened the second time, I truly was planning to leave, and I had maneuvered myself into being paid money by the library to do this federal grant, which was to go out and do a state-wide survey of where women’s papers were in libraries and museums all over the state.

I also had established a relationship with Oral History, because my students in this first class that we did—“Nevada Women on the Frontier”—they began to realize what a boon an oral history was to learning about people in the past. And some of them were saying, “How do you do oral histories? We need to find out more.”

So I went to Tom King [Director, University of Nevada Oral History Program] and said “I’ve got some people who want to learn how to do oral histories, and they aren’t necessarily academics; they aren’t working on degrees, but they want to learn.”

He said, “Well, I could do a non-credit course. If you had like twenty people, I would do a three-week course,” which was maybe nine hours. I found, very quickly, people who wanted to do that, including you. Isn’t that right?

*Yes. [laughter] There’s another one of life’s ironies—that we didn’t know we would be doing this, did we?*

Right, right. Actually, I think Tom connected you with us, because you had connected with him on something else. But anyway, we did this and it was very successful. It was three weeks of intensive introduction. We all learned how complicated doing oral histories is. But out of it, some of the people experimented on each other, and we got to listen to their tapes the final day, and we got good “how to” resources to use from Tom

Out of that Tom and I had established a kind of communication, and he knew what I was doing in my class and seemed interested in it. He also is a good friend of Bob Blesse, so he knew what I was doing with the Women’s Archives. We actually ended up having lunch together one day about the time that I felt I had no job at all. [laughter] I wasn’t going to teach Women’s Studies because they had now found somebody else they wanted to hire. And then the federal grant hadn’t yet come through, so I wasn’t sure I had that grant, and I had decided that I didn’t want to continue with National Issues Forum. We had done that three years in a row and we had built up a really active program, but I just couldn’t move in both tracks at the same time. Both were pulling me to really major programs, and I couldn’t do both at the same time. So I decided I preferred Women’s History and Women’s Studies over the Issues Forum as a direction to go for the next few years.

Here I was, it was like May of 1995 and it looked like I might not have any job at all. And so Tom said, “Well, I could use some help in Oral History. You know, maybe there is something we could do together.” He had just lost his long-time associate, Helen Blue, and that was a big blow to him. He was down staff and sorting out some of his programs as well, so I wrote him a letter proposing some things that we might do together—that I saw my skills being able to fit with his program.

We talked, and he said he had a little bit of money.

Well, by the time we got back to agreeing on the time and amount of money, I was back in as Director of Women’s Studies, because the candidate the search committee had chosen had turned them down. Now I had that job again, and the library grant had come through. I had like three jobs, so I said to Tom, “Well, right now all I can tell you is that I might be able to do about five hours a week or something.”

We agreed on an amount of money he would pay me to do five hours a week and the kind of general idea as to what I was going to do. I went into that year—that fall of 1995—closing out the National Issues Forum; again another year teaching “Introduction to Women’s Studies” in the fall and “Nevada Women on the Frontier” in the spring; and now doing the statewide survey for the university related to the Nevada Women’s Archives . . .

*And five hours for oral history . . .*

. . . also being President of my church, which I had agreed to do, believing I was leaving Women’s Studies and was going to have this opening of time. I went into that fall with just this awful over-commitment, in the final analysis.

That was my final year with the university, but it is that year that the development of the Nevada Women’s History Project evolved. All of this happened while I was running the Women’s Studies office and was able to use the university office as my home base of operations.

I had not expected to have that position another year, but as it turned out, they did need me. I was very comfortable in the



situation and felt that I could negotiate some terms under which I might stay. [laughter]. You know, the first year, I was just really glad to have the job, and they were just so great to me all along the way, but by this fourth year I was really on a roller coaster. I was living the life of working on soft money or «if come» projects.

I would have some feelings of being used a little bit, in that I was there to pick up the pieces if their game plan wasn't working the way it was supposed to—the Women's Studies professor search. But on the other hand, I felt that I could use it to my own advantage to further, not necessarily me, but to further projects that had started as a result of my being on campus—like the Women's History Project and the Women's Archives. So when they came to me and said, «Guess what, we really need you . . .» (actually, they needed me through the whole academic year, 1995-1996, in order to do their search) . . . I said, «OK. The money has come through for the archives project to work part-time for the university library. That is my first commitment. I can continue in a half-time position with Women's Studies. However, I have to have some secretarial help.» I had had a student assistant at six hours a week, but I really wanted more than that. I wanted a part-time secretary that could handle some of the bureaucratic work of being a department head, so I said that was one of the conditions that I had that I would like them to honor.

I also wanted a travel budget, because I had already gone down and connected with UNLV and established initial support for creating the archives down there as well. They were interested in my coming down on a part-time basis and helping find papers in southern Nevada, but they were in a political crunch, where the new President was coming in and I think that the Dean of the Library, that had

been real supportive, had some problems in finding money to pay me to do something.

In the meantime, the first Director of Women's Studies for UNLV had been hired. Before that it had been an interdisciplinary program with different faculty. A woman named Dr. Ellen Rose was hired, and from the very beginning she loved the idea of collaborating with UNR and really wanted even to further the idea of doing distance learning classes between the two campuses and exchanging faculty. I had brought her up to visit UNR when I had a faculty enhancement grant, earlier. I brought her up to talk about feminine pedagogy, and how it could be used in all classrooms and just a bunch of things we had already done. And so this whole idea emerged of a real collaboration, which could be a pilot at the university system for showing how campuses could work together and how campuses and communities could work together, which again, is the kind of thing that Crowley and Hoover loved seeing happen, and many of the members of the regents were interested in, as well. I fit right into helping make something like that happen, so it was to UNR's advantage to let me use some of my time to go to UNLV and cultivate this relationship, and the travel money would be to go down and work with UNLV in collaborating on Women's Studies and Women's Archives programming.

I think there were a couple of other things we needed like a new printer. We needed a laser printer. That was the other thing that I said I had to have. Well, they gave me all those things, because they knew that I deserved them. [laughter] They weren't quite sure what I'd do if they said no. [laughter] I think I might not have stayed, had they not given me all that, because I had been working under really sparse circumstances there for them for three and a half years at that point. So, anyway,

they gave me that go-ahead, and it was kind of like they endorsed the fact that, if I had been a true professor as Head of Women's Studies, I would have had my own area of research, like all professors do. Well, I had carved mine out. It was Nevada Women's History, so I deserved to spend some of my time on my research while I was there working for the university. And basically, they agreed with that. That kind of established me in a variety of circles as being a little bit more legitimate in what I was doing.

During that time, Sheryl Kleinendorst, who was a student (I think we've talked about Sheryl before) and who by now was a junior moving toward being a senior in the School of Journalism, was very active with us in our leadership program and interested in writing. We connected on developing a history of Women's Studies, which we felt was needed, particularly since we felt this next search was going to produce a new full-time Professor of Women's Studies. I was truly going to be gone. Who was going to know what had happened up to that point? Who was going to have that history? I was getting really immersed in the value of history here, and we didn't know our own history of how Women's Studies had come about: who had been its mentors along the way; how had the courses evolved; how had the university supported or not supported its growth? And so Sheryl and I set about going through all kinds of old files and records, and talking to people who were still around like Anne Howard.

We put together a beautiful publication, called *The History of Women's Studies* at the UNR campus, basically, and we did a very special spring program honoring the early people that were still on campus. It was a kind of a Women's History Month thing. I remember Anne Howard and Linda White, specifically being honored; and then Helen

Jones, who came in early on; and then just a lot of other people who taught part-time.

Another thing that we did, through all the years I was in Women's Studies was Women's History Month programming. That had been done before I came. The first couple of years I did it in concert with the Women's Center, and then we kind of split off and each did our own. We brought in a variety of speakers and programming. One year we had Edith Mayo, the Curator of the First Ladies' Collection at the Smithsonian in Washington. She lectured and we co-sponsored that. We celebrated the League of Women Voters' seventy-fifth anniversary and the anniversary of suffrage with programming in 1995, which was the seventy-fifth anniversary of both.

We sponsored a distance learning class, "Feminist Theory", which was taught by Ellen Rose at UNLV—half the class was at UNR and half was at UNLV. It worked beautifully, even to the point where they sat in a circle. The half circle was at either end of the state. The way the television screens were, you got the feeling that you were a circle of women. I mean, it was just amazing, how they could get involved in really good discussions and be 450 miles apart. That was sponsored both by Continuing Education and Women's Studies.

During this time, as a result of having started the "Women on the Frontier" class, I connected with Ron James, or he connected with me and told me about his new research on women on the Comstock and how he'd found all this new census data on CD ROM which enabled research to be done much faster. He was interested in looking at the role of women on the Comstock, and he gave me a rough draft of an article he was doing for the *Historical Society Quarterly*—kind of introduction to all that—plus an outline of the chapters of a book that he and Elizabeth Raymond had decided they wanted to edit

about women on the Comstock. They had gone to anyone they knew, who had done any research in this area and asked them if they would work on a chapter for the book, so they had about ten different chapters outlined—just the title and the researcher.

Well, I read that because of my class and how we were gathering women's history, and I gave it back to him and said, "Gee, this is really interesting, but you *haven't* included a plan to look at the role of women on the Comstock in politics, in public life, and I *know* that they would have been doing something." So it was one of those times when the person you say that to turns around to you and says, "Oh, you're right. How about you doing that?" That's what he did. He said, "Well, you're absolutely right and gee, I don't know of anyone who has been working in that area. How would you like to see what you can find out?"

I thought, ooh, wow! And it was right at a time when I thought, "Oh, sure, that would be fun," and so I said OK. This led me into the world of historical research. We knew we had maybe a year. There were some deadlines, but they were a long way off.

Linda White and I, who had become good friends from her being the head of my advisory committee, had talked informally about our collaborating on something—that she could just see a combination where my research and her writing might really come together. She just liked that idea of maybe our setting aside time to do that. Well, then I told her about this opportunity. I talked to Ron James and I said, "What about Linda White working with me on this?" And he said fine.

So we set out, and for at least nine months, we had a schedule. I started doing a lot of reading of secondary materials, and then determining where my sources were going to be that I was going to look at for my outline.

We got together once a week, and I just talked out loud, and she wrote. She put things on the computer, on the word-processor.

Neither of us really knew what we were doing. She is not a historian. She had just decided to start working on her doctorate in Basque Studies and, of course, worked full-time in Basque Studies as a teacher. It isn't like she had time just to sit around and do this, but we both had such fun at these meetings that we kept doing it. We realized we didn't know as much about what we were looking for, and we weren't doing it in a really disciplined kind of way. We were just having a lot of fun, and I was finding all this great material, but then getting it into a cohesive form was another issue.

Well, I started just doing *voluminous* reading about the Comstock—first everything any other author had written and looking for the role of women. If they didn't have women in it, I scanned it pretty quickly, but if it did, then I started taking notes. I started building an incredible set of files about women on the Comstock. I worked as I could, but more and more I could see where it could just consume me. I'd just get going and then want to spend two or three days doing nothing but hiding in the state library or somewhere.

Eventually, that did result in our turning in a draft of a chapter about women in public life. It was given good marks and bad marks by Elizabeth Raymond and Ron James. They said that we really had done an incredible amount of good original research and had material that needed to be in a chapter, but they didn't like the way we put it together. It really needed a major re-write kind of thing. This was right at a time when Linda was headed for Spain for a semester to work on her doctorate, so the two of us met with Elizabeth Raymond, and Linda just said, "You know, I can't proceed with more work on this."

Elizabeth said, “Well, I know of a graduate student that I think could pick up with what you all have, and come out with what we need.” And that was Anita Watson. So she said, “Would I have your permission to explore this with her?” As a result, Anita became the third author and, actually, the primary author of the article. She put it in the shape that the editors felt would enhance the material the most. I worked with Anita; I gave her all my files and she had them for about two months, so I worked closely with her. That book has come out with our chapter in it, with all three of us as authors.

*Right, right because they are doing book signings now.*

Right, and that book is available just in the last two weeks. [December 1997]

I got started on historic research there. Of course, that just gave me all this additional knowledge on how to work with my students when I ask *them* to do historic research, which I had been doing without really having done it myself, and so I didn’t have a really good clue on how to work with them.

*And you learned it just from actually doing it, or did you have advice along the way?*

Oh, I did have advice. I had outlines. I met with Ron James [State Archivist and co-editor of *Women on the Comstock*]; I met with Elizabeth Raymond [University of Nevada, Reno history professor and co-editor of *Women on the Comstock*]; I talked with Jim Hulse [University of Nevada, Reno history professor emeritus]. You know, I just got really into it with a number of people and, oh, I love it. I mean, I’d be happy just to do nothing but that. [laughter] It was good. But there were a few other things that I had on my plate, so we proceeded.

I got my students involved, too. It went along very well in “Women on the Frontier” to then start having students see what newspaper research was all about. I would assign each of them a two-week period in 1914 with a Nevada newspaper and gave them a matrix to work with, and they were supposed to look for the role of women as identified in those newspapers during that time. That was the suffrage year—the big suffrage year—that the big campaign happened. So that was broadening *my* research of what I had about suffrage, which I could use then in the writing I was doing, but it also was giving the students first-hand knowledge on what was happening.

We were starting to build a real database around the history of suffrage. In fact, Betty Glass, whom I became good friends with at the library—she’s an instructional librarian at UNR and very interested in women’s issues—she took the work of my students and put it into a database on the computer. We have a database of those newspapers for a two-year period with an incredible amount of material on Nevada women that needs to be published and made available to researchers, so some products started coming out that we could leave for others.

*So it’s in database. It’s in raw form, just the research notes and that sort of thing?*

Yes, it’s a hard-copy matrix that could be bound. I mean, there is some fine-tuning to do, but it’s out there. And then my students, the following year, added to it. We haven’t put the additions into the database, so it’s a work in progress.

Another thing that I started doing around that time is working with the Humanities Committee on a program called “Humanities on the Road.” Joan Morrow was working for them on that particular project, and I don’t

know if this was about 1994 maybe, or 1995. But at one point she came to me and said, "We are renewing our list of people that we have as 'Humanists on the Road' that we publicize to the state."

People can book these speakers and they pay like thirty-five dollars to the Humanities Committee, and the Committee then pays its own set of honorarium and travel expenses to the speaker. That had been going on, I guess, for several years. I had not really paid that much attention to it, but now they were asking me if I would *be* one of those scholars, "Humanists on the Road." I gave them two or three choices of topics that I felt were relevant, and they chose "*Women on the Comstock*" as the one to publicize.

I was listed in a pamphlet along with eighteen or nineteen other humanists in the state and started getting bookings—people calling and saying, "Oh, we'd like to have Jean Ford come and do her presentation for us." Oh, that was just *wonderful*, to be *paid* to go into rural Nevada and speak in those little towns that I love, and to talk about my research on "*Women on the Comstock*" was just a plus. That was wonderful. I was invited to places like Yerington and Battle Mountain—the BLM staff in Battle Mountain. This was practically three-quarter male staff and one-quarter female, and they had me come during Women's History Month as their speaker on this program. And the residents of Silver City had me come up to the little old historic school house that's been the town hall in Silver City for a long time, right outside of Gold Hill. And then Yerington—the library had me come during Library Week in the spring. Austin—the high school had me come. Las Vegas—the Mesquite Club invited me. In Reno I did it for a Methodist Church Women's Circle, and here in Carson for a Lutheran Women's Circle. I've probably done it twenty

times somewhere in the state. That's just been a real pleasure for me to take my new-found knowledge and share it with a wide variety of groups. That was very compatible with being on campus and my job on campus. I mean, they liked that.

*Do you talk just about the results that you found or do you also talk about the process of how you found your information, too?*

Oh, the process too, right. And the title has changed to a variety of different directions now with what people want and new information that I have. So yes, I talk both about the process and the value of women's history—it's always tied to women's history. And then for the Women's History Project, I do a little missionary work out there on the side, recruiting people to get involved in some way. I always include what people in the audience can do to further preserve history, starting with their own families, so I do three or four things any time I go out to speak.

The search in 1995 for a Women's Studies professor did produce a Ph.D. It produced two people, actually, that they liked. The person that ultimately accepted and came was Dr. Jennifer Ring, who had been in South Carolina and whose discipline is political science. She had left South Carolina and was living in Berkeley, and her husband was teaching there. They have two children—two girls that were at that time about eight and twelve, I think, something like that. She accepted on the terms that she couldn't start until January of the following year, and she accepted like in the spring of 1995. She couldn't come until the spring of 1996. So then they wanted me to stay again, and then they said OK to her conditions.

When she came in the spring, it turns out that she commuted. She came on Mondays



and went back on Wednesdays to Berkeley, even when she started work. She started teaching and she had space designated to create a whole Women's Studies suite on the first floor of Mack Social Studies. They were going to take some classrooms and turn them into the office, which they have done, but none of that had started. That, too, was part of her negotiation—getting that office. One of the things for coming is that she knew she would not have the kind of office I had had for four years, which for me was perfectly adequate. But if you're going to run a full-fledged program, you need to be on campus, and you need to have the kind of office she has, which is fabulous. She didn't start working on any of that until she arrived, and it took a full six months for them to redo the space into her office, to decide on how much money she could have for furniture and then order the furniture.

All that started in the spring of 1996, so she had been hired in the fall of 1995, when they still needed me to be there. So when I say I was there four and a half years, I was there four years as the Director, and then for that half year, she had been identified but she was not yet there physically. She was living in Berkeley and finishing out some other things that she was doing, and her husband was teaching. She just negotiated that she couldn't come until January. So they needed somebody to continue to keep the pieces together.

When she did come, by that time, they had moved my office out of the University Inn into an apartment complex nearby, which was fine, and I continued to function with the basic administrative things. Then when she came, she had no office and she kind of camped out at the dean's office that first semester that she commuted. She certainly could have just walked right in and taken my office, but it wasn't convenient for her.

Actually, they wanted me to continue to function even that spring, which I did under just an independent contract called an LOA [Letter of Appointment].

I just went to Dean Ann Ronald and said, "Well, I need some instructions. Who's going to open the mail? Who's going to prepare the fall schedule this spring?" They just had all these myriad of administrative details that were needed to function, whether she's chosen to be here then or not. If they didn't have somebody else doing it, it was going to be the dean's office that was going to do all that. I mean, the Women's Studies Office still had to continue to function. They hadn't really stopped to think about that. So she said, "Well, I guess we need to hire you for the spring semester to do just that."

She offered me enough money that I continued with no teaching responsibilities from that position, but I was now teaching "Women on the Frontier" as an independent instructor under a Letter of Appointment anyway.

Well, let's go ahead and finish with Jenny. During that spring we met several times, and we did a lot of inventorying of what we had in the office, which wasn't a lot, because she started mainly from scratch with everything. She hired her own secretary. She started functioning as the department head—as a program head, really. It wasn't a full-fledged department. They re-created her advisory board, and she started to function. Since then she has gotten permission for the Women's Studies Program to offer a major instead of just a minor. As of this last fall—the semester just ended—that is possible. To really make it happen they need more professors teaching more classes. Now, she's going after more approvals of course work that can be offered in the future. Her offices are excellent, and there's a real presence for Women's Studies

on campus. So the transition has now taken place, and it's an ongoing program.

*And it was a smooth transition, it sounds like.*

Yes, yes, right, right.

Back in that kind of elongated phase where they did the final search and found her, it took another year almost for her to come and start functioning. I was now working on the archives with the university library. I was doing a little bit of work with Tom King at the Oral History Program. Actually, the main thing *he* wanted me to do was look for potential women in this state that ought to have their oral histories done. He was looking at aiming sometime in the future at a series on those women, so I spent quite a bit of time, and I loved doing that. I gathered profiles of women and gathered them in areas of focus like politics or gaming or mining or education, so that he had a lot to draw from, if and when he decided he could proceed with that.

But it became harder and harder to give time to that because [laughter] of all these other things, and that five hours a week had been the last priority as all these other things blended together. Then Tom decided that he really wanted me to go raise money—that was where he thought I might really help his program. That had never been on *my* list of things that I could do for him. Some of the things that had been on my list were things that did not interest him, and raising money for him was *not* appropriate for me to do; that's not my strength, even for my own programs. I mean, I'm not a very good "closer," as they say. [laughter] And it would really be a conflict, in some ways, with what I was doing on campus and with the Women's History Project, which had by this time become a full-fledged organization. Ultimately, I resigned from

my position of working with Oral History, thanking him for the opportunity I'd had to get to know him and his program more. I had taken it on when we thought I had a lot more time and had a lot more flexibility, and now I was really boxed in with all these other commitments. So I think we parted friends, you know. [laughter] It was just nothing that I could do at that point in time. That kind of brought closure to that, although I loved supporting the Oral History Program and seeing the newsletter come out. He started putting out the statewide newsletter and created Friends of Oral History and all of that, and that's how you and I have had some continuing contact, as well.

*Right, through the Oral History Program.*

And he did follow through on a couple of women that I had introduced him to and, particularly Lina Sharp [retired teacher from Railroad Valley, Nevada]. Did you see her, by the way, on Monday?

*No, I didn't see her.*

She was at the luncheon [Nevada Commission on Tourism luncheon honoring Jean Ford]. So anyway, I've been really pleased to see the Oral History Program grow the way it has. And of course, I am *utterly* pleased to become a part of it, as far as a person being interviewed. That's real exciting.

*One of the things that you said is that you identified a number of women around the state for a series. Do you remember about how many?*

Oh, I identified forty or fifty. Tom has all that. I have copies of it. He particularly was interested in ethnic women, and *I* was

particularly was interested in making sure ethnic women of color were included. I talked with a number of them in Las Vegas—Bernice Moten, Alice Key, other people that are down there that are a part of Las Vegas history.

At one point, we actually were talking about my working with the West Las Vegas librarian, Kelly Richards, who had training in oral history. The West Las Vegas Library is the one in the black community pretty much, and he is a black who had gotten a master's in history and voiced an interest in having his library engage in a West Las Vegas oral history project of some kind. At one point, Tom and I talked about my being involved with that, and then Kelly's schedule just kept slipping and slipping because of illness and other responsibilities and the timing just didn't work out. He had the skills on oral history, but he didn't know the people because he was new to Las Vegas. I felt we would have been a really good team, and I was really sorry that that project didn't move forward, that we weren't able to work on that project together. In the meantime, you know, Dr. McMillan, a black dentist in Las Vegas, has been interviewed by Gary Elliott.

So yes, I've got a huge file on the research I did for Tom, and the people that I think ought to have oral histories done in the state. I learned all the nuts and bolts of what it takes to do an oral history program, which is a lot more complicated than one thinks.

*To do a whole project, right.*

Right, I mean, for an office like his to function—what all it takes, and what kind of support, and what kind of money you need and all that.

Well, during this whole time that the university was then searching and finding these people that they liked, my dream was to

be able to continue to work with the Women's Studies Program in kind of a community outreach position. I felt I could probably even raise the money which would pay me to be an administrative assistant to the Women's Studies' Director, and I could continue doing some of these community-related projects under the university umbrella.

Another thing that had begun was the teaching of Women's Studies at TMCC. Bridget Boulton had done that one semester, I believe, and then another member of the faculty up there. There was a committee that got together to arrange this. Well, during this time the Board of Regents had come out very strongly urging every campus to have a commission on the status of women and to examine sexual harassment and equity issues on campus, so all campuses did that. Some were more eager to jump into these things than others, and at TMCC that committee ended up pushing Women's Studies courses on campus. Cyd McMullen, out in Elko at Great Basin College, and some friends of hers started team-teaching a Women's Studies class. Then Ellen Rose was now down in Las Vegas.

In the meantime, something I don't think I've mentioned at all is that three different semesters I taught Women's Studies 101 for Western Nevada Community College in Carson City. That was in addition to all this other stuff I was doing. It was one course, three credits, and it was on the WNCC campus. And so Women's Studies was being taught on almost *every* higher education campus in the state. We had the idea of a consortium of people who cared about Women's Studies in Nevada coming together and being a support network for each other and sharing syllabi and just helping move forward the whole concept of Women's Studies within the university system. And, of course, we hadn't even begun

to touch on (in fact, I used to cringe when I'd think about it) "I wonder what they're doing over in the College of Education; I wonder if they're doing anything to prepare teachers in the classroom with some of these concepts that we talk about in Women's Studies—about equity and respect for individuals regardless of gender and just all kinds of things," because I'd had almost no connection with the College of Education. There were all these things that could be done under the leadership and the umbrella of a Women's Studies program. I thought, "Wouldn't it be neat if I could stay and continue to do these things—organize projects and let the Chair be the academic and be the scholar and organize the academic offerings on campus and everything, but I would do all this added dimension kind of stuff." To me, that was just the ideal combination.

Well, that really never, ever even came to being seriously considered. I wrote up a proposal. Ellen Rose wrote a proposal on how that could work with her, and she was just so strongly supportive down at UNLV. Politically, that could have been a real showcase, because the campuses just bicker at each other so much and get into internal politics that some kind of positive, where there's two campuses working together and in a program that is really producing good results and everything, could have been a showcase for everybody. But the manner in which the search was conducted, and then the long waiting period for Jenny Ring to get here, I knew by that time, I was beyond that. I couldn't wait another two years to see if all this was going to fall into place.





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DEVELOPING WOMEN'S STUDIES

I just found the whole Women's Studies approach to teaching is just wonderful, and it ought to be used by every faculty on the campus. I mean, Women's Studies has so much to bring to education as a whole, and part of it is the pedagogy used—the style of teaching begins with students and professor sitting in a circle, a more collaborative approach.

I tell every class that what I have designed for you in the syllabus is a structured journey. My job is to take the topic that we have said we're teaching in this course, that is the area of focus, and to create a manageable path—a plan—where over the course of about fourteen weeks, we move from introduction to conclusion. My style is going to be a mixture of lecture, visual aids, discussion, but also from much more of their questioning. So that is somewhat Socratic, but I don't do simply a Socratic method.

*You do a combination.*

Right. That we're going to learn together, and what's going to come out of this is

something that neither of us knows yet at this point. I'm there as a facilitator, and I've provided how we're going to divide the topics up and what kind of papers they're going to work on that show me that they're working on it, and what kind of end-product are we aiming toward. That's what my syllabus is, and I'm going to be there every time to facilitate what happens. But it's really up to *them* to learn.

*Right. You say that you don't know where you're going to end up with each class. Have the end results surprised you? Have you come up with some exciting things?*

Oh, just incredible. I mean, yes. Just the number of people that I know the classes have had a positive impact on are just incredible. It has worked. It's been so rewarding to do that and to have students come back and take more classes because I'm the one teaching them—that's just been real rewarding. Plus, they have talked about how it has made them grow. They have had to take charge of their own learning,

and they have grown as people, and they have found whole new areas of interest that they didn't have before.

The pedagogy of Women's Studies across the country is what I'm talking about, starting with, for instance, sitting in a circle as opposed to an auditorium-style room arrangement. Now, obviously, in a major lecture course, you can't do that. You can't do it much beyond twenty people. But I was fortunate that I had courses of those sizes.

Sitting in a circle, people are human. People get to know each other as people. They get to know the professor as a person. The syllabus is the structured journey through a particular area of learning. We're all going to grow out of it. We're going to disagree on theories and concepts, but we're going to respect each other's right to think. Creating a safe environment where people can share is a very big part of Women's Studies, and it's also criticized highly by those who look at it as a real "touchy-feely" kind of thing. And there is "touchy-feely" in it if it's done right. Particularly "Introduction to Women's Studies," where it's the first time some people have ever looked at women as individuals in their own right. It's the awareness of how people start thinking about, "What's the first time I realized that I was a woman and that being a woman was different in how I was going to be treated?"

You start talking about that in a classroom, and you get some interesting insights. Some people have never thought about it until that point, but you do end up getting emotions come to the fore to some degree; but you don't let that take over. And that's where . . .

*That's where you provide the safety?*

Right, that's where the structured journey is. It doesn't wind up in just a glorified rap

session. So it takes some skills in trying to keep a balance between academic learning and the practicality of the real world and everything else.

I really found the right place to do that. I really hit on that, and I brought some strengths to that, and I learned some new skills that enabled me to provide, I think, a really good combination of all that in the classroom. So it just became *very* rewarding for me to be teaching courses. And, of course, the most exciting one was "Nevada Women on the Frontier," which I designed from scratch.

An observation I should make here: I'm used to giving a *lot* for my time and energy. Again, you get into either state government or the university system and dealing with that whole thing that you don't want to break the norm, because if you work too much better and too much faster than the next person, then you change the median, and everybody has got to work faster and smarter. Well, people don't like that, you know. [laughter] A lot of people don't like that. I've always been that way. I'm going to deliver a certain quality with what I want to do, no matter if I work overtime, or whatever.

I brought this idea of "Nevada Women on the Frontier" to the Women's Studies advisory board, and this whole concept that I wanted one credit to be the field trip on a bus. I had this whole idea. They looked at me, and I remember Duncan Aldrich who was on the board from the university library staff, looked at me and said, "What you're talking about is a several hundred thousand dollar grant. You ought to write a proposal to somebody to get a several hundred thousand dollar grant to do this." And, in the scheme of the things of a university world, you know, that *is* often what people do. I did it for nothing. I mean, I did it on my own time. [laughter] I got paid \$2,000, I think, to do the course that spring.

I organized the tour. I took people on the tour. I did what he legitimately said for many other people would have been a full-blown project—that they would have to get paid by somebody else to do. I did it, you know, because I wanted to do it. I got paid to teach the course, but all the extra stuff I just did, because that's what it took to make that particular course work. Then it worked so well that I taught it five times, and it was different every year because I learned from the students what made it a better course. I took them in different directions and all that.

So anyway, my experience at the university was just very, very positive, because I was basically left alone to do my thing. And that resulted in being able to teach a lot of really interesting classes and developing and working with student organizations on campus.

*I had two questions. And one is to talk about some specific projects that some of your students came out of the courses with, that were surprising or interesting or helpful later on. And then also to talk a little bit about the new skills that you learned. You said you learned some of them from your students. I think those two things would be interesting to cover.*

OK. One of the things I did was require students to make a presentation of their reports. They were graded on their written report, but not on their performance, because I wanted to encourage them to explore new methods of presentations. What I found was that students would get turned on and continue their work after the course. For example, from one course that I taught in Carson City, the students chose to create costumes and make Chautauqua-style presentations. Six students continue to do this for their own organizations, on their own,

and have gone on to do additional research on their costumes and characters.

Then starting with "The Nevada Women on the Frontier" class, that was my opening to consciousness-raising about the lack of women's history. I had been interested in Nevada history by my travels through the state and the history of women, not really to any degree more than just general history, but I knew I wanted a history component to that class. I'm not an historian by training, so I thought, let's have the students each do a woman in Nevada history to bring back to the class, so we get some footing on what was going on before us.

The whole purpose in the class was to raise the question: Is there still a frontier? And if so, what kind? So we were learning about Nevada as a place—our sense of place—how we relate to Nevada. And people like Elizabeth Raymond, Will Shepperson, Jim Hulse and others had done some great writing about Nevada and sense of place, and how we as Nevadans fit or don't. I did an anthology of readings that the students would use. Some of it had to do with Nevada and then some of it had to do with women. I had them do a research project at the beginning on the history of a woman; a research project at the end on current-day women; and one area of focus like mining, or religion, or ranching or arts. And so we were all over the place. [laughter]

For the history part, I went to Special Collections, and I asked them to give me a list of the women that the students could research—meaning that there were either books written about them or papers about them. They came back to me with a list that was shorter than the number of students I had in the class. Now, they had more women than that in their collection, but I was asking for this northwest quadrant of the state to be the

area of focus. I was asking for people that were deceased, that there was enough information about them that they could pull together kind of a history—a life history. Using those parameters, they didn't have much.

Then they started saying, "Well now, there are some oral histories that you could use," and they started looking at some other sources of information. That was my beginning of looking at: What do we know about women in our own history? And through what sources do we know that?

I went ahead and I used their list, and then we started adding to it as we became aware of other resources. That was the spring of 1992. By the end of that semester, I had gone back to Special Collections and said, "We have to do something about this. What would you think if we mounted a campaign to find papers about Nevada women? Either women that are deceased, that the papers are in their homes, or people that are still living. At least the next generation will know what was going on with women of this era."

I spoke with Susan Searcy [Archivist II and Project Director for the Nevada Women's Archives] first, who spoke with Bob Blesse [Head of Special Collections for the University of Nevada, Reno library], and then came back to me and said, "We think that's a great idea."

See here, I was still working half-time on campus, although I was doing this Issue Forum thing, which was really taking up a lot of my time. But I said that I was willing to work on collecting papers, particularly if we could raise some money to pay me to travel. For instance, if I needed to go out and call on people, I was making enough money from all these contracts and everything that I didn't need more money to live; I was just looking at what it would take to make the project work.

The idea of the Nevada Women's Archives was developed right then. Actually, Susan wrote up a position paper on that concept and it was approved up the line. The initial money that we got, so that I could go out and start gathering papers, was from Maya Miller and Barbara Thornton. I personally approached both of them and just told them where I was at and my vision of what needed to be done. They both were just really supportive. And then other money came. Rollan Melton really thought this was a great idea from the very first day, and he called Susan one day and said, "I've got you a \$5,000 grant from the John Ben Snow Trust." That was totally unsolicited by us, and he has connections with that particular source.

Then I started gathering papers, and we created the advisory board and started sending out a letter to all kinds of potential donors of papers—and mainly women who had been in office because they were easiest to identify and they were the ones I knew.

Although I started with the idea of women in politics, I'll be forever grateful to Barbara Thornton, because in meeting with her, she said, "Well I really like this idea, but I can tell you that I do not want it limited to women in politics—that if I'm going to support it, it has to be broader than that." And, you know, she was right. It was out of that that we brought in Ollie Walters's diary, who had not much to do with women in politics.

*And she was a ranch wife in the Yerington area. Yes.*

Right, right. By this fall of 1992, the Women's Archives was a reality. We had about, I don't know, \$3,000 or \$4,000 to start with, and we could use it for me to travel or the postage for the mailings. We created a special fund at Special Collections, and then people

started donating. In our letter we offered them the opportunity to donate money, and some people sent back checks.

At that point I reached out to southern Nevada, as well, because that's where many of these people were, of course, that had these papers. The situation at the university library down there was not good. There was no Director of Special Collections at that point in time, and there hadn't been for about a year. And the Dean of Libraries was retiring. There just was nobody on campus in the library system that cared about this kind of thing. I even started bringing some of the papers from southern Nevada up here, because there just was no evidence they would ever get taken care of down there.

Well, of course, that got some people's attention in the history department who did care about women's history, and so ultimately, within the next year, things had changed down there dramatically. There was a new Dean of Libraries, Matt Simon, and I met with him. He was very supportive of my concept of the Nevada Women's Archives. They hired a Director of Special Collections, Peter Michel, who had experience from Missouri. They hired Carol Corbett, who was a part-time archivist, to start processing collections, which they had had there for ten years or so and nothing had ever happened to them—they were just sitting in boxes. So we were able to generate a lot of interest down there.

The history department was very supportive. Dr. Joanne Goodwin was the main person. She and Gene Moehring of the history department really went to the Dean of Libraries and said, "We will even put graduate students in work-study on learning how to process papers, if you will take this on at the library." So, the Nevada Women's Archives began then at both campuses, and that continues today.

There have now been several hundred collections brought in—I'd say probably 500 total—both north and south. This can range from just a few pages about a person to thirty-five or forty cubic feet about a person. Some of them are quite extensive, and most of them have been processed, because then the UNR library applied to the state for a federal grant to take this a couple of steps further. The state committee is chaired by Guy Rocha, the State Archivist, and the grant is from a group called the National Historic Records Preservation Committee, or something like that. They got the grant, and that enabled me to go to work for them for pay, because every year I was looking at leaving the Women's Studies job. I found that I really wanted to continue on the women's history, that I really had found a home. I wanted to continue doing that. So working part-time for the university library on a grant to go gather papers and inventory—which was the next stage, was to inventory what else was out there in the state—really fit my interest totally.

By this time, I also now realized that I had enough years that I could retire within the state system, the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS). That my combination of work for the Clark County Library for eighteen months, then my work for state government for four and a half years, and now my work for the university was all adding up to enough years to be vested to be eligible for retirement. [laughter] When I first went to the university, it was with the idea I was going to be there a year, so all of a sudden this began to look *really* good, that I could even get some retirement out of this if I continued to work for the system.

The Women's Studies did another search in the third year, which also was unsuccessful. [laughter] They skipped the second year, which was the bad money time. OK, the third



year, they did another search and they found somebody, and the person turned them down. In both of these instances, it was people who, in the final analysis, wanted their husbands or partners guaranteed jobs if they came. In one case, it was a partner; in the other case, it was a husband—that they wanted a guaranteed job on campus. The university, in both instances, felt they could not do that.

When it happened the second time, I truly was planning to leave, and I had maneuvered myself into being paid money by the library to do this federal grant, which was to go out and do a state-wide survey of where women's papers were in libraries and museums all over the state.

I also had established a relationship with Oral History, because my students in this first class that we did—"Nevada Women on the Frontier"—they began to realize what a boon an oral history was to learning about people in the past. And some of them were saying, "How do you do oral histories? We need to find out more."

So I went to Tom King [Director, University of Nevada Oral History Program] and said "I've got some people who want to learn how to do oral histories, and they aren't necessarily academics; they aren't working on degrees, but they want to learn."

He said, "Well, I could do a non-credit course. If you had like twenty people, I would do a three-week course," which was maybe nine hours. I found, very quickly, people who wanted to do that, including you. Isn't that right?

*Yes. [laughter] There's another one of life's ironies—that we didn't know we would be doing this, did we?*

Right, right. Actually, I think Tom connected you with us, because you had

connected with him on something else. But anyway, we did this and it was very successful. It was three weeks of intensive introduction. We all learned how complicated doing oral histories is. But out of it, some of the people experimented on each other, and we got to listen to their tapes the final day, and we got good "how to" resources to use from Tom

Out of that Tom and I had established a kind of communication, and he knew what I was doing in my class and seemed interested in it. He also is a good friend of Bob Blesse, so he knew what I was doing with the Women's Archives. We actually ended up having lunch together one day about the time that I felt I had no job at all. [laughter] I wasn't going to teach Women's Studies because they had now found somebody else they wanted to hire. And then the federal grant hadn't yet come through, so I wasn't sure I had that grant, and I had decided that I didn't want to continue with National Issues Forum. We had done that three years in a row and we had built up a really active program, but I just couldn't move in both tracks at the same time. Both were pulling me to really major programs, and I couldn't do both at the same time. So I decided I preferred Women's History and Women's Studies over the Issues Forum as a direction to go for the next few years.

Here I was, it was like May of 1995 and it looked like I might not have any job at all. And so Tom said, "Well, I could use some help in Oral History. You know, maybe there is something we could do together." He had just lost his long-time associate, Helen Blue, and that was a big blow to him. He was down staff and sorting out some of his programs as well, so I wrote him a letter proposing some things that we might do together—that I saw my skills being able to fit with his program. We talked, and he said he had a little bit of money.

Well, by the time we got back to agreeing on the time and amount of money, I was back in as Director of Women's Studies, because the candidate the search committee had chosen had turned them down. Now I had that job again, and the library grant had come through. I had like three jobs, so I said to Tom, "Well, right now all I can tell you is that I might be able to do about five hours a week or something."

We agreed on an amount of money he would pay me to do five hours a week and the kind of general idea as to what I was going to do. I went into that year—that fall of 1995—closing out the National Issues Forum; again another year teaching "Introduction to Women's Studies" in the fall and "Nevada Women on the Frontier" in the spring; and now doing the statewide survey for the university related to the Nevada Women's Archives . . .

*And five hours for oral history . . .*

. . . also being President of my church, which I had agreed to do, believing I was leaving Women's Studies and was going to have this opening of time. I went into that fall with just this awful over-commitment, in the final analysis.

That was my final year with the university, but it is that year that the development of the Nevada Women's History Project evolved. All of this happened while I was running the Women's Studies office and was able to use the university office as my home base of operations.

I had not expected to have that position another year, but as it turned out, they did need me. I was very comfortable in the situation and felt that I could negotiate some terms under which I might stay. [laughter].

You know, the first year, I was just really glad to have the job, and they were just so great to me all along the way, but by this fourth year I was really on a roller coaster. I was living the life of working on soft money or «if come» projects.

I would have some feelings of being used a little bit, in that I was there to pick up the pieces if their game plan wasn't working the way it was supposed to—the Women's Studies professor search. But on the other hand, I felt that I could use it to my own advantage to further, not necessarily me, but to further projects that had started as a result of my being on campus—like the Women's History Project and the Women's Archives. So when they came to me and said, «Guess what, we really need you . . .» (actually, they needed me through the whole academic year, 1995-1996, in order to do their search) . . . I said, «OK. The money has come through for the archives project to work part-time for the university library. That is my first commitment. I can continue in a half-time position with Women's Studies. However, I have to have some secretarial help.» I had had a student assistant at six hours a week, but I really wanted more than that. I wanted a part-time secretary that could handle some of the bureaucratic work of being a department head, so I said that was one of the conditions that I had that I would like them to honor.

I also wanted a travel budget, because I had already gone down and connected with UNLV and established initial support for creating the archives down there as well. They were interested in my coming down on a part-time basis and helping find papers in southern Nevada, but they were in a political crunch, where the new President was coming in and I think that the Dean of the Library, that had been real supportive, had some problems in finding money to pay me to do something.

In the meantime, the first Director of Women's Studies for UNLV had been hired. Before that it had been an interdisciplinary program with different faculty. A woman named Dr. Ellen Rose was hired, and from the very beginning she loved the idea of collaborating with UNR and really wanted even to further the idea of doing distance learning classes between the two campuses and exchanging faculty. I had brought her up to visit UNR when I had a faculty enhancement grant, earlier. I brought her up to talk about feminine pedagogy, and how it could be used in all classrooms and just a bunch of things we had already done. And so this whole idea emerged of a real collaboration, which could be a pilot at the university system for showing how campuses could work together and how campuses and communities could work together, which again, is the kind of thing that Crowley and Hoover loved seeing happen, and many of the members of the regents were interested in, as well. I fit right into helping make something like that happen, so it was to UNR's advantage to let me use some of my time to go to UNLV and cultivate this relationship, and the travel money would be to go down and work with UNLV in collaborating on Women's Studies and Women's Archives programming.

I think there were a couple of other things we needed like a new printer. We needed a laser printer. That was the other thing that I said I had to have. Well, they gave me all those things, because they knew that I deserved them. [laughter] They weren't quite sure what I'd do if they said no. [laughter] I think I might not have stayed, had they not given me all that, because I had been working under really sparse circumstances there for them for three and a half years at that point. So, anyway, they gave me that go-ahead, and it was kind of like they endorsed the fact that, if I had been

a true professor as Head of Women's Studies, I would have had my own area of research, like all professors do. Well, I had carved mine out. It was Nevada Women's History, so I deserved to spend some of my time on my research while I was there working for the university. And basically, they agreed with that. That kind of established me in a variety of circles as being a little bit more legitimate in what I was doing.

During that time, Sheryl Kleinendorst, who was a student (I think we've talked about Sheryl before) and who by now was a junior moving toward being a senior in the School of Journalism, was very active with us in our leadership program and interested in writing. We connected on developing a history of Women's Studies, which we felt was needed, particularly since we felt this next search was going to produce a new full-time Professor of Women's Studies. I was truly going to be gone. Who was going to know what had happened up to that point? Who was going to have that history? I was getting really immersed in the value of history here, and we didn't know our own history of how Women's Studies had come about: who had been its mentors along the way; how had the courses evolved; how had the university supported or not supported its growth? And so Sheryl and I set about going through all kinds of old files and records, and talking to people who were still around like Anne Howard.

We put together a beautiful publication, called *The History of Women's Studies* at the UNR campus, basically, and we did a very special spring program honoring the early people that were still on campus. It was a kind of a Women's History Month thing. I remember Anne Howard and Linda White, specifically being honored; and then Helen Jones, who came in early on; and then just a lot of other people who taught part-time.

Another thing that we did, through all the years I was in Women's Studies was Women's History Month programming. That had been done before I came. The first couple of years I did it in concert with the Women's Center, and then we kind of split off and each did our own. We brought in a variety of speakers and programming. One year we had Edith Mayo, the Curator of the First Ladies' Collection at the Smithsonian in Washington. She lectured and we co-sponsored that. We celebrated the League of Women Voters' seventy-fifth anniversary and the anniversary of suffrage with programming in 1995, which was the seventy-fifth anniversary of both.

We sponsored a distance learning class, "Feminist Theory", which was taught by Ellen Rose at UNLV—half the class was at UNR and half was at UNLV. It worked beautifully, even to the point where they sat in a circle. The half circle was at either end of the state. The way the television screens were, you got the feeling that you were a circle of women. I mean, it was just amazing, how they could get involved in really good discussions and be 450 miles apart. That was sponsored both by Continuing Education and Women's Studies.

During this time, as a result of having started the "Women on the Frontier" class, I connected with Ron James, or he connected with me and told me about his new research on women on the Comstock and how he'd found all this new census data on CD ROM which enabled research to be done much faster. He was interested in looking at the role of women on the Comstock, and he gave me a rough draft of an article he was doing for the *Historical Society Quarterly*—kind of introduction to all that—plus an outline of the chapters of a book that he and Elizabeth Raymond had decided they wanted to edit about women on the Comstock. They had gone to anyone they knew, who had done any

research in this area and asked them if they would work on a chapter for the book, so they had about ten different chapters outlined—just the title and the researcher.

Well, I read that because of my class and how we were gathering women's history, and I gave it back to him and said, "Gee, this is really interesting, but you *haven't* included a plan to look at the role of women on the Comstock in politics, in public life, and I *know* that they would have been doing something." So it was one of those times when the person you say that to turns around to you and says, "Oh, you're right. How about you doing that?" That's what he did. He said, "Well, you're absolutely right and gee, I don't know of anyone who has been working in that area. How would you like to see what you can find out?"

I thought, ooh, wow! And it was right at a time when I thought, "Oh, sure, that would be fun," and so I said OK. This led me into the world of historical research. We knew we had maybe a year. There were some deadlines, but they were a long way off.

Linda White and I, who had become good friends from her being the head of my advisory committee, had talked informally about our collaborating on something—that she could just see a combination where my research and her writing might really come together. She just liked that idea of maybe our setting aside time to do that. Well, then I told her about this opportunity. I talked to Ron James and I said, "What about Linda White working with me on this?" And he said fine.

So we set out, and for at least nine months, we had a schedule. I started doing a lot of reading of secondary materials, and then determining where my sources were going to be that I was going to look at for my outline. We got together once a week, and I just talked out loud, and she wrote. She put things on the computer, on the word-processor.

Neither of us really knew what we were doing. She is not a historian. She had just decided to start working on her doctorate in Basque Studies and, of course, worked full-time in Basque Studies as a teacher. It isn't like she had time just to sit around and do this, but we both had such fun at these meetings that we kept doing it. We realized we didn't know as much about what we were looking for, and we weren't doing it in a really disciplined kind of way. We were just having a lot of fun, and I was finding all this great material, but then getting it into a cohesive form was another issue.

Well, I started just doing *voluminous* reading about the Comstock—first everything any other author had written and looking for the role of women. If they didn't have women in it, I scanned it pretty quickly, but if it did, then I started taking notes. I started building an incredible set of files about women on the Comstock. I worked as I could, but more and more I could see where it could just consume me. I'd just get going and then want to spend two or three days doing nothing but hiding in the state library or somewhere.

Eventually, that did result in our turning in a draft of a chapter about women in public life. It was given good marks and bad marks by Elizabeth Raymond and Ron James. They said that we really had done an incredible amount of good original research and had material that needed to be in a chapter, but they didn't like the way we put it together. It really needed a major re-write kind of thing. This was right at a time when Linda was headed for Spain for a semester to work on her doctorate, so the two of us met with Elizabeth Raymond, and Linda just said, "You know, I can't proceed with more work on this."

Elizabeth said, "Well, I know of a graduate student that I think could pick up with what you all have, and come out with what

we need." And that was Anita Watson. So she said, "Would I have your permission to explore this with her?" As a result, Anita became the third author and, actually, the primary author of the article. She put it in the shape that the editors felt would enhance the material the most. I worked with Anita; I gave her all my files and she had them for about two months, so I worked closely with her. That book has come out with our chapter in it, with all three of us as authors.

*Right, right because they are doing book signings now.*

Right, and that book is available just in the last two weeks. [December 1997]

I got started on historic research there. Of course, that just gave me all this additional knowledge on how to work with my students when I ask *them* to do historic research, which I had been doing without really having done it myself, and so I didn't have a really good clue on how to work with them.

*And you learned it just from actually doing it, or did you have advice along the way?*

Oh, I did have advice. I had outlines. I met with Ron James [State Archivist and co-editor of *Women on the Comstock*]; I met with Elizabeth Raymond [University of Nevada, Reno history professor and co-editor of *Women on the Comstock*]; I talked with Jim Hulse [University of Nevada, Reno history professor emeritus]. You know, I just got really into it with a number of people and, oh, I love it. I mean, I'd be happy just to do nothing but that. [laughter] It was good. But there were a few other things that I had on my plate, so we proceeded.

I got my students involved, too. It went along very well in "Women on the Frontier" to



then start having students see what newspaper research was all about. I would assign each of them a two-week period in 1914 with a Nevada newspaper and gave them a matrix to work with, and they were supposed to look for the role of women as identified in those newspapers during that time. That was the suffrage year—the big suffrage year—that the big campaign happened. So that was broadening *my* research of what I had about suffrage, which I could use then in the writing I was doing, but it also was giving the students first-hand knowledge on what was happening.

We were starting to build a real database around the history of suffrage. In fact, Betty Glass, whom I became good friends with at the library—she's an instructional librarian at UNR and very interested in women's issues—she took the work of my students and put it into a database on the computer. We have a database of those newspapers for a two-year period with an incredible amount of material on Nevada women that needs to be published and made available to researchers, so some products started coming out that we could leave for others.

*So it's in database. It's in raw form, just the research notes and that sort of thing?*

Yes, it's a hard-copy matrix that could be bound. I mean, there is some fine-tuning to do, but it's out there. And then my students, the following year, added to it. We haven't put the additions into the database, so it's a work in progress.

Another thing that I started doing around that time is working with the Humanities Committee on a program called "Humanities on the Road." Joan Morrow was working for them on that particular project, and I don't know if this was about 1994 maybe, or 1995. But at one point she came to me and said, "We

are renewing our list of people that we have as 'Humanists on the Road' that we publicize to the state."

People can book these speakers and they pay like thirty-five dollars to the Humanities Committee, and the Committee then pays its own set of honorarium and travel expenses to the speaker. That had been going on, I guess, for several years. I had not really paid that much attention to it, but now they were asking me if I would *be* one of those scholars, "Humanists on the Road." I gave them two or three choices of topics that I felt were relevant, and they chose "*Women on the Comstock*" as the one to publicize.

I was listed in a pamphlet along with eighteen or nineteen other humanists in the state and started getting bookings—people calling and saying, "Oh, we'd like to have Jean Ford come and do her presentation for us." Oh, that was just *wonderful*, to be *paid* to go into rural Nevada and speak in those little towns that I love, and to talk about my research on "*Women on the Comstock*" was just a plus. That was wonderful. I was invited to places like Yerington and Battle Mountain—the BLM staff in Battle Mountain. This was practically three-quarter male staff and one-quarter female, and they had me come during Women's History Month as their speaker on this program. And the residents of Silver City had me come up to the little old historic school house that's been the town hall in Silver City for a long time, right outside of Gold Hill. And then Yerington—the library had me come during Library Week in the spring. Austin—the high school had me come. Las Vegas—the Mesquite Club invited me. In Reno I did it for a Methodist Church Women's Circle, and here in Carson for a Lutheran Women's Circle. I've probably done it twenty times somewhere in the state. That's just been a real pleasure for me to take my new-found

knowledge and share it with a wide variety of groups. That was very compatible with being on campus and my job on campus. I mean, they liked that.

*Do you talk just about the results that you found or do you also talk about the process of how you found your information, too?*

Oh, the process too, right. And the title has changed to a variety of different directions now with what people want and new information that I have. So yes, I talk both about the process and the value of women's history—it's always tied to women's history. And then for the Women's History Project, I do a little missionary work out there on the side, recruiting people to get involved in some way. I always include what people in the audience can do to further preserve history, starting with their own families, so I do three or four things any time I go out to speak.

The search in 1995 for a Women's Studies professor did produce a Ph.D. It produced two people, actually, that they liked. The person that ultimately accepted and came was Dr. Jennifer Ring, who had been in South Carolina and whose discipline is political science. She had left South Carolina and was living in Berkeley, and her husband was teaching there. They have two children—two girls that were at that time about eight and twelve, I think, something like that. She accepted on the terms that she couldn't start until January of the following year, and she accepted like in the spring of 1995. She couldn't come until the spring of 1996. So then they wanted me to stay again, and then they said OK to her conditions.

When she came in the spring, it turns out that she commuted. She came on Mondays and went back on Wednesdays to Berkeley, even when she started work. She started

teaching and she had space designated to create a whole Women's Studies suite on the first floor of Mack Social Studies. They were going to take some classrooms and turn them into the office, which they have done, but none of that had started. That, too, was part of her negotiation—getting that office. One of the things for coming is that she knew she would not have the kind of office I had had for four years, which for me was perfectly adequate. But if you're going to run a full-fledged program, you need to be on campus, and you need to have the kind of office she has, which is fabulous. She didn't start working on any of that until she arrived, and it took a full six months for them to redo the space into her office, to decide on how much money she could have for furniture and then order the furniture.

All that started in the spring of 1996, so she had been hired in the fall of 1995, when they still needed me to be there. So when I say I was there four and a half years, I was there four years as the Director, and then for that half year, she had been identified but she was not yet there physically. She was living in Berkeley and finishing out some other things that she was doing, and her husband was teaching. She just negotiated that she couldn't come until January. So they needed somebody to continue to keep the pieces together.

When she did come, by that time, they had moved my office out of the University Inn into an apartment complex nearby, which was fine, and I continued to function with the basic administrative things. Then when she came, she had no office and she kind of camped out at the dean's office that first semester that she commuted. She certainly could have just walked right in and taken my office, but it wasn't convenient for her. Actually, they wanted me to continue to function even that spring, which I did under

just an independent contract called an LOA [Letter of Appointment].

I just went to Dean Ann Ronald and said, "Well, I need some instructions. Who's going to open the mail? Who's going to prepare the fall schedule this spring?" They just had all these myriad of administrative details that were needed to function, whether she's chosen to be here then or not. If they didn't have somebody else doing it, it was going to be the dean's office that was going to do all that. I mean, the Women's Studies Office still had to continue to function. They hadn't really stopped to think about that. So she said, "Well, I guess we need to hire you for the spring semester to do just that."

She offered me enough money that I continued with no teaching responsibilities from that position, but I was now teaching "Women on the Frontier" as an independent instructor under a Letter of Appointment anyway.

Well, let's go ahead and finish with Jenny. During that spring we met several times, and we did a lot of inventorying of what we had in the office, which wasn't a lot, because she started mainly from scratch with everything. She hired her own secretary. She started functioning as the department head—as a program head, really. It wasn't a full-fledged department. They re-created her advisory board, and she started to function. Since then she has gotten permission for the Women's Studies Program to offer a major instead of just a minor. As of this last fall—the semester just ended—that is possible. To really make it happen they need more professors teaching more classes. Now, she's going after more approvals of course work that can be offered in the future. Her offices are excellent, and there's a real presence for Women's Studies on campus. So the transition has now taken place, and it's an ongoing program.

*And it was a smooth transition, it sounds like.*

Yes, yes, right, right.

Back in that kind of elongated phase where they did the final search and found her, it took another year almost for her to come and start functioning. I was now working on the archives with the university library. I was doing a little bit of work with Tom King at the Oral History Program. Actually, the main thing *he* wanted me to do was look for potential women in this state that ought to have their oral histories done. He was looking at aiming sometime in the future at a series on those women, so I spent quite a bit of time, and I loved doing that. I gathered profiles of women and gathered them in areas of focus like politics or gaming or mining or education, so that he had a lot to draw from, if and when he decided he could proceed with that.

But it became harder and harder to give time to that because [laughter] of all these other things, and that five hours a week had been the last priority as all these other things blended together. Then Tom decided that he really wanted me to go raise money—that was where he thought I might really help his program. That had never been on *my* list of things that I could do for him. Some of the things that had been on my list were things that did not interest him, and raising money for him was *not* appropriate for me to do; that's not my strength, even for my own programs. I mean, I'm not a very good "closer," as they say. [laughter] And it would really be a conflict, in some ways, with what I was doing on campus and with the Women's History Project, which had by this time become a full-fledged organization. Ultimately, I resigned from my position of working with Oral History, thanking him for the opportunity I'd had to get to know him and his program more. I

had taken it on when we thought I had a lot more time and had a lot more flexibility, and now I was really boxed in with all these other commitments. So I think we parted friends, you know. [laughter] It was just nothing that I could do at that point in time. That kind of brought closure to that, although I loved supporting the Oral History Program and seeing the newsletter come out. He started putting out the statewide newsletter and created Friends of Oral History and all of that, and that's how you and I have had some continuing contact, as well.

*Right, through the Oral History Program.*

And he did follow through on a couple of women that I had introduced him to and, particularly Lina Sharp [retired teacher from Railroad Valley, Nevada]. Did you see her, by the way, on Monday?

*No, I didn't see her.*

She was at the luncheon [Nevada Commission on Tourism luncheon honoring Jean Ford]. So anyway, I've been really pleased to see the Oral History Program grow the way it has. And of course, I am *utterly* pleased to become a part of it, as far as a person being interviewed. That's real exciting.

*One of the things that you said is that you identified a number of women around the state for a series. Do you remember about how many?*

Oh, I identified forty or fifty. Tom has all that. I have copies of it. He particularly was interested in ethnic women, and I was particularly was interested in making sure ethnic women of color were included. I talked with a number of them in Las Vegas—Bernice

Moten, Alice Key, other people that are down there that are a part of Las Vegas history.

At one point, we actually were talking about my working with the West Las Vegas librarian, Kelly Richards, who had training in oral history. The West Las Vegas Library is the one in the black community pretty much, and he is a black who had gotten a master's in history and voiced an interest in having his library engage in a West Las Vegas oral history project of some kind. At one point, Tom and I talked about my being involved with that, and then Kelly's schedule just kept slipping and slipping because of illness and other responsibilities and the timing just didn't work out. He had the skills on oral history, but he didn't know the people because he was new to Las Vegas. I felt we would have been a really good team, and I was really sorry that that project didn't move forward, that we weren't able to work on that project together. In the meantime, you know, Dr. McMillan, a black dentist in Las Vegas, has been interviewed by Gary Elliott.

So yes, I've got a huge file on the research I did for Tom, and the people that I think ought to have oral histories done in the state. I learned all the nuts and bolts of what it takes to do an oral history program, which is a lot more complicated than one thinks.

*To do a whole project, right.*

Right, I mean, for an office like his to function—what all it takes, and what kind of support, and what kind of money you need and all that.

Well, during this whole time that the university was then searching and finding these people that they liked, my dream was to be able to continue to work with the Women's Studies Program in kind of a community outreach position. I felt I could probably even

raise the money which would pay me to be an administrative assistant to the Women's Studies' Director, and I could continue doing some of these community-related projects under the university umbrella.

Another thing that had begun was the teaching of Women's Studies at TMCC. Bridget Boulton had done that one semester, I believe, and then another member of the faculty up there. There was a committee that got together to arrange this. Well, during this time the Board of Regents had come out very strongly urging every campus to have a commission on the status of women and to examine sexual harassment and equity issues on campus, so all campuses did that. Some were more eager to jump into these things than others, and at TMCC that committee ended up pushing Women's Studies courses on campus. Cyd McMullen, out in Elko at Great Basin College, and some friends of hers started team-teaching a Women's Studies class. Then Ellen Rose was now down in Las Vegas.

In the meantime, something I don't think I've mentioned at all is that three different semesters I taught Women's Studies 101 for Western Nevada Community College in Carson City. That was in addition to all this other stuff I was doing. It was one course, three credits, and it was on the WNCC campus. And so Women's Studies was being taught on almost *every* higher education campus in the state. We had the idea of a consortium of people who cared about Women's Studies in Nevada coming together and being a support network for each other and sharing syllabi and just helping move forward the whole concept of Women's Studies within the university system. And, of course, we hadn't even begun to touch on (in fact, I used to cringe when I'd think about it) "I wonder what they're doing over in the College of Education; I wonder if

they're doing anything to prepare teachers in the classroom with some of these concepts that we talk about in Women's Studies—about equity and respect for individuals regardless of gender and just all kinds of things," because I'd had almost no connection with the College of Education. There were all these things that could be done under the leadership and the umbrella of a Women's Studies program. I thought, "Wouldn't it be neat if I could stay and continue to do these things—organize projects and let the Chair be the academic and be the scholar and organize the academic offerings on campus and everything, but I would do all this added dimension kind of stuff." To me, that was just the ideal combination.

Well, that really never, ever even came to being seriously considered. I wrote up a proposal. Ellen Rose wrote a proposal on how that could work with her, and she was just so strongly supportive down at UNLV. Politically, that could have been a real showcase, because the campuses just bicker at each other so much and get into internal politics that some kind of positive, where there's two campuses working together and in a program that is really producing good results and everything, could have been a showcase for everybody. But the manner in which the search was conducted, and then the long waiting period for Jenny Ring to get here, I knew by that time, I was beyond that. I couldn't wait another two years to see if all this was going to fall into place.





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NEVADA WOMEN'S HISTORY PROJECT

In the meantime, creating the Nevada Women's History Project became more and more important. Well, we created it, and then it began to take over. I mean the success of it was just so overwhelming.

*Because the Nevada Women's History Project started to have a whole life of its own separate from the university?*

Right, that began to take my time, plus the research I'd done led me to other research, and I wrote my first drama.

The first drama that I wrote was in the spring of 1995 as part of this Women's History Celebration. We got help from the Nevada Humanities committee, and fifteen people performed in the old Assembly chambers of the capitol. I had no idea I could do something like that, and while I don't see myself as an author, as a writer (it's just agony for me to write essay-type stuff), doing the drama *was* something that was just really easy for me to do. That is a format or a genre (or whatever is the right word) that I can do.

*So writing play scripts are easy for you?*

Scripts, right, and it wasn't a real dialogue script where the characters interacted with each other a lot. We created the umbrella of narrators to set the context and then had the narrators introduce vignettes of history where those characters told their own stories in sequence—pulling all that together in a sequential fashion that had human interest, fact, comedy and tragedy and all those things. I *loved* doing the research and pulling it into a form where people could perform it and it would really click. That was easy for me, so I began to see that, wow! I could even make a contribution in that way.

People started coming to me and saying, "We would like to write a humanities proposal for you to do another drama script, and this time we want you to do it on the history of Carson Valley." That's what Cecile Brown did. They were just opening the Carson Valley Historical Society—the cultural museum down there in the old high school. She wrote the proposal and had heard about the one we'd

done the year before and just said, “We want something like that down here, but we want it to be about Carson Valley.” Well, I had no clue what Carson Valley had done about suffrage. It didn’t show up prominently in the history at all, so I had to go do new research and identify new characters. We picked local people down there to perform as these characters in history.

I had gotten involved in things like that, and so by the time Jenny Ring came, the idea of staying and working in Women’s Studies was not a viable one. Politically, I’m sure it never was a viable one. That would have not been good for her to come and start and have someone like me that close around her program to start with. She needed her own space and time to do it her way.

What has happened is that I went off and just let the Women’s History Project become my baby and chaired it from the beginning until the end of my two-year term. Then, most recently, I was moving into being a part-time paid Director. That became my major mechanism for functioning, that my projects could all blend under that umbrella for the most part very well.

Some of those projects led us *back* to Women’s Studies this last year, to get them to come and co-sponsor the conference and to be a member of the History Project. Dr. Ring and the dean have all been *very* supportive. We are working together in collaboration now and in ways that none of us would have dreamed.

One other thing I did when I was on campus that I really feel good about—although I was not the only voice—I was one who, at one point in time, went to Joe Crowley and made an appointment with him specifically to talk about Sue Wagner and what was going to happen to her in the future. This was after the plane crash, at some point where she was sorting out what she was going to do

with the rest of her life and also really needing a job at one point, too. I think it was when she was finishing up being Lieutenant Governor and announced that she would not run again.

*Because of her injuries from the airplane crash?*

Her physical condition just could not lend itself to going through campaigns and then the requirements of serving. I could really identify with some of that—certainly not in any degree with the pain aspect, although I certainly can now. I just felt the campus was a perfect place for her, at least for some piece of what she was doing.

I went to Joe Crowley just to say, “Have you looked at the idea of bringing Sue Wagner on campus, endowing a Chair or creating some spot for Sue? Because she has so much to offer.” Again, we’d all been doing workshops and teaching “Women in Politics,” and she has a master’s in history, although she’s not worked as a historian at all. I think she taught high school journalism or something once. I just felt she belonged on campus and that there ought to be a way that they could create a position—a guest professorship or something—maybe not forever. I think I called it visiting-scholar-in-residence, or something like that—the idea of bringing Sue for a year and having her teach something about women in politics or public administration as an extra added attraction within the Political Science Department. There were a lot of other things that someone like that could do as well: they could mentor students; they could work with the Women’s Center. They could work with Women’s Studies—they were doing the search, and who knew who was going to come in, although it fit more with Political Science.

Just politically, to get Sue Wagner tied with the university campus, I felt was good for

them and good for her. I mean, she belonged in that kind of setting, and that ultimately happened. I talked with *her* about it. In fact, I remember going to her at the Governor's Conference. (I'm just thinking of this, right this minute.) At the Governor's Conference on Tourism, she was the Lieutenant Governor presiding, and she was in a suite up at the Hilton. I made an appointment to go see her and say, "Can I speak to Joe Crowley about the idea of you teaching a class on campus, because I want your permission before I do that?"

And she said, "Yes, I'm mulling over prospects." She was getting offers from the private sector to go to work. There were a ton of people who wanted her to become their lobbyist and stuff like that, *none* of which she felt she could do—either personally, just for all kinds of reasons, or health-wise. That it was the kind of regimen that she couldn't live.

*Neither ethically nor physically?*

Right, right. It was really tough for her to be—and still is—at the top of the ladder and then to know you've got to look for a job just to make a living. And yet, you know you are a public figure, and so just any job won't do. Because I've been through that same sequence myself, where just any job wouldn't do. It didn't fit where I felt I was and where I wanted to go.

*In terms of skill or image?*

Right, yes, yes. She gave me permission, but she wasn't wildly enthusiastic about it. I think she had some other ideas she was trying to cultivate. But ultimately, Joe and Sue ended up sitting together on an airplane, I think, between Las Vegas and Reno. Out of all of this, it emerged and he said, "Call me and make an appointment and let's talk."

He offered her a position in Political Science, which he then had to go make OK with the Political Science Department, which was a little touchy, I think. In fact, Eric Herzik, who was then Acting Chair and is now Department Chair, was very supportive of it from the beginning, but the department (as I understand it) was not. It just goes back to the fact that she did not have a Ph.D. So here we are [laughter] back again to people who come up the ladder a different way with skills and credentials, but they aren't satisfying to the world of academe.

What they did, which I thought was a good answer for the time, because I think the department did have real questions about her coming on to the faculty—it really would have been a bending of big rules, of the big, big principles on campus—she was made the Associate Chair of the Great Basin Policy Center. In fact, this was something on paper that hadn't ever functioned, but could function, and this was something that Harry Reid had gone to bat for. There was somebody who wanted to create this policy center. I don't even know all the details, but it had been created, I think by an act of Congress, for such a policy center in the Department of Political Science on campus, but it had no funding. Somebody needed to make it their baby and go create a funding base. Its purpose would be to go get money for grants to do policy research in the Great Basin related to Political Science in some way. Well, those things can be *very* successful, so it was a really viable idea. Sue still holds that title and she, Eric, and others have gotten several projects funded under that umbrella.

In the meantime, she has taught "Women in Leadership" two different semesters, which was *highly* acclaimed and over-booked, I think. Then she headed up the intern program for the last session of the Legislature. That

was one thing she could see right off the bat, where she could bring just a real—oh, incredible—knowledge and competence to giving those students who were legislative interns a thousand-fold more than they had been getting out of that experience, because other professors in Political Science simply haven't had the real world experience that she had. So she was able to turn that intern program into something just wonderful. I don't know whether there is a continuing relationship that is going to stay there or not. I hope so.

Of course, her Gaming Commission appointment is a top responsibility that does pay her well, and she has to think about that as compared to on-again-off-again on campus. But I hope that relationship with the university will continue.

*Explain the Nevada Gaming Commission appointment?*

She was appointed to that by Governor Miller in the last year. It's a full-time job. I mean, one doesn't have to go to an office from nine to five, but they get paid well to review all the cases that come before the state on licensure. The staff—the Gaming Control Board—is the professional arm that does all the research on these applicants, but then it goes to the commission for approval or denial, and they have the final say. It's a *very* important body. It's important that it have integrity and that it manages the quality of gaming control in the state. To have someone like Sue on there is just incredibly good for it, in terms of her integrity, and one does not expect to find women in these kinds of roles. There's another woman on the commission as well, who was there before Sue. They meet monthly and they spend *days* reviewing all these cases, which they do by themselves—

kind of like Supreme Court justices—each reviewing the case matter and then coming together to debate the issues. That's what this gaming group does. They come together to hear final testimony from the applicants, then they hear the recommendations of the control board, and then they make decisions. So that is her number one occupation these days, which is, I think, a real win-win.

*We were talking, too, about how it suits the physical limitations that she's been left with, because she can study at home and be comfortable and yet have a full-time job?*

Right, right, and so I think it's very exciting for her. Yes, she has a minimum of having to really sit up in a chair around a table and deal with that kind of thing. She can set up her own space the way she can operate. She did that on campus, too.

Another thing that wasn't too nice was that somehow the Political Science department could never find her an office on campus. I mean, they could never find a spot for an office for Sue, so she never had one.

*How did she function, or did she function on campus?*

No, no, she didn't. I think that was difficult. I mean, they certainly made arrangements where they took messages at the Political Science Department and gave her the messages. But meeting students, if they wanted to talk with her, and all of that was always a little tricky. I think that's too bad, that somehow they couldn't do that, but that's the way it goes. So anyway, I felt I played a little bit of a role in seeing Sue get onto the university campus, and I think that's as it should be, and I hope it will continue in some way.



Well, the big thing that was emerging for me and just everything that was coming together that I just found great satisfaction out of seemed to have to do with Nevada women's history. I still was not, in a disciplined way, developing a game plan, because it was emerging. Things would come out of things that we did. Results would dictate that we go in this direction. Again, I really wasn't real clear until they *hired* this person for Women's Studies that that part of my life was over. Then I needed to start looking at, "Well, what do I now want to do here?"

I also had this really *wonderful* situation, at this point in time, where the added years at the university enabled me to see that I could get some retirement from the state system. When I went there just as a one year Acting Director, that is what we thought it would be. It wasn't until I was into about the third year, that all of a sudden it began to click and all the years started adding up. The combination of the working for the local library in Las Vegas in the late 1970s, and then for Dick Bryan in my state position in the 1980s, and now at the university. All these grants that I started working on with the library, they started putting into my contract, so that all my soft money work was counting toward retirement as well and was benefitting me toward retirement. They were taking some of my money out, of course, for that. I was working even more than half time, so it was all adding up to where I could actually start drawing retirement.

I started looking at when that might happen, and what did that mean? You know, then I could *really* do what I wanted to do. [laughter] Retirement became an element that I had to start seriously looking at. Now, I really didn't do that well, because I just loved teaching these courses so much and they kept asking me to continue. You have to commit

like four months in advance before you start teaching the next one. So all of a sudden, they were there saying, "Well, you are going to teach 'Nevada Women on the Frontier' in the spring, aren't you?" And so I would say, "Of course." Well, then I began to really look into the details of what it took for me to retire, and one of the details was that I could not earn any money from the system for ninety days. That's one of the rules of the system—that you have a complete break. After those ninety days, you can start working again for the system up to about \$15,000 a year. Then if you work beyond that, then they start cutting back on your retirement. I didn't keep looking ahead at a point where I was going to say, "OK and this is going to be my clean three months." [laughter] I kept committing to doing things that somebody within the university system was going to pay me to do, either research or course teaching. I could have retired, like a year earlier than I did, had I been smarter and had I said, "I'm simply not going to teach," or "I'm not going to do this thing in the summertime." Ultimately, it was this past summer when I finally had the ninety days that I was clear.

I started looking seriously at money, at what it was going to take for me to live on and how did I want to earn that. I had a whole bunch of options now by this time. I knew that I had developed a reputation for research, writing, and humanities project administration. There were people coming to me; Joan Kerschner was coming to me saying, "We think we'd like you to write the history of libraries in the state. When do you think you could get around to doing that?" And the Dangberg Foundation, which is a private foundation dedicated to educational materials for schools, set up by Grace Dangberg, a Carson Valley pioneer woman who is since dead—they hired me to do some spot work

on some of their history to make sure women were blended into the history book. I knew that more of that kind of thing was possible to do. I could see where I could freelance in a variety of ways, so it was a question of what *did* I want to do? Retirement would never give me enough to live on, to where I could just go do it all as a volunteer.

*You would still have to work part-time?*

Retirement would give me about half of what I needed to continue to live in the life style that I was living, which is adequate, not fancy. I just am not a world-traveler type. Heading off on a million cruises and all of that does not interest me at all. Having my house, living in Carson, being able to do the things I like doing, buying clothes (which I've always done) and traveling in the West—that wasn't going to take a ton of money. What I wanted to do, I could earn money doing, and all of that blended together. It just was a matter of picking and choosing then how that was going to work.

In the meantime, the last two years at the university became more and more focused on women's history. A lot of it was when we celebrated Women's History Month by celebrating the 75th anniversary of suffrage and also of the League of Women Voters. That year really focused a *whole* bunch of us on Nevada women's history. We began to see what was already in the archives that we had never known was there—that we needed to go look at it and that we needed to make those women come alive.

I began to meet more and more people who thought that was a good idea. My telephone would ring at the Women's Studies Office and I began to realize, some days I'd spend more than half my time acting as a connector of people who were interested in

Nevada women's history. People like you, Vikki, would call and say, "I really think I want to move from working full-time PR to doing something about women's history." And I would tell you about three other people that were talking about doing the same thing, and maybe you ought to form a company.

Then someone else would call and say, "Will you come and speak to this organization? We want to get involved in something." And then someone else would call and say, "I need to find somebody who wants to do an oral history for someone," and I knew two or three people I could recommend. So my office was becoming kind of information and referral.

*You were a one-person clearing house for all the projects that were going on.*

That's right. That's right. That's right. And I tried to think well, who else should be doing this? Where should we be calling to make all this happen? There wasn't any other logical place. The History Department at the university does not at all have a focus on Nevada history. I mean there are people like Bill Rowley and Jim Hulse, who do Nevada history (Jim part-time), and Jerry Edwards, but they haven't done women; that's just not been an area of focus for them. There is no one in the department that really is pushing to see that that area gets covered.

A lot of what we were doing was coming from the community as much as it was coming from campus. It was coming from both. So then where else do you go? The Historical Society? It is a strange animal in that it started under Jenny Wier years ago as a non-profit, state-wide organization. It struggled and continued to struggle, until finally it was made a part of state government and given a budget. They still call it the Historical Society, yet there really is no society. They do

this conference every two years, alternating between Reno and Las Vegas, where they come together and various university types read papers. Peter Bandurraga gives a kind of "State of the Society," which is kind of telling what the budget committees are going to give the museums in the state and what directions they're going in that regard. But as far as functioning as a membership group and welcoming grass roots activity and all of that, it is not an organization that I see functioning in that manner. There are little historical societies around the state that are each struggling to keep going in their own community with their own focus.

*And they're more organized along that line that you were just talking about, with membership? Is that true?*

Right, yes. There is the Central Nevada Historical Society in Tonopah, the Northeastern Nevada Historical Society in Elko, and the Humboldt County group, and ultimately *they* then get big enough to create a museum of some kind which houses their artifacts and is their home. Some of them have done wonderful things, and some of them like Elko, particularly, have gotten tremendous local financing and foundation money, so that they are just far beyond a museum that a town of that size ordinarily has.

So *all* of these are groups that we had been working with. Nevada Humanities Committee was just a fabulous umbrella for sponsoring the furtherance of appreciation of history. But when you look at women's history, there's nobody out there saying this is most important to us. Women's organizations do it as kind of, "Now and then we'll go back and light a candle for those who came before us," you know, but not nearly in the manner that they ought to be doing it.

Again, it was the focus on the history of suffrage and the history of the League that forced us to go look at our own history. We found, wow! Carrie Chapman Catt, herself had come to Nevada and started the League of Women Voters. None of us that had come up through the League knew that. That was so exciting when Cyd McMullen really put it all together in a presentation to us.

So the idea started evolving. I, as one who has been organizing groups forever, was thinking, "Maybe there needs to be a group organized just for this purpose." For want of a better name, the Nevada Women's History Project (NWHP) was what we came up with. I think we tried the word "network" for awhile and "association" and some others.

I started running this idea by half a dozen people that were involved with me one way or another—either students or teachers or community people. Out of that came a retreat up at Lake Tahoe of about a dozen people in the fall of 1995, I guess. From the beginning, I thought this should be a statewide project. Ultimately, I had a vision of something that was a long way from happening, but that vision included Las Vegas, and so we tried to get some people from Las Vegas to come up to this retreat, and one person came, Judy Habbeshaw. She is the daughter of Thalia Dondero and she actually was finishing her master's degree in history at the university down there. Unfortunately, she was moving to Montana in the next six months, but she had been working with us on some women's history programming we had done down at UNLV that spring, so she came up for this meeting and then carried the word back down. And for a whole day a group of us got together. Were you in that group at the church?

*Oh, no, I was not at the church. I was at the resort, which was the second retreat.*

Well, the meeting at the church was the first official meeting. When we talked at Meeks Bay, it was just some ideas. It was the spring. It was May or June of that year.

*Yes. Yes, might have even been Memorial Day weekend or something like that.*

Well, yes. And I told you then that this idea was kind of all coming together and we wanted to go forward, and we wanted you to be a part of it, and everything.

*Right. So there was a meeting prior to that. Is that correct?*

Well, no. No, we were developing ideas up at Meeks Bay. Going to Meeks Bay was not for that purpose. This was like the third time we had gone to Meeks Bay. We need to back up and just say that one of the things that was happening is that students were not leaving once the courses were over with. A lot of these were older women not needing to work on degrees—already had degrees, many of them. They were taking the classes for personal growth or coming back for brush-up on graduate work, but they would just say, “Well, what are we going to do next? I don’t want to quit now.”

Some of them had their own family research projects or some of them just wanted to connect, like they belonged to book clubs, or they just wanted to create a way that we would all continue to get together. Beverly Hubbard was one of those. She had taken “Women on the Frontier” the very first year I taught it and just got into the world of Nevada history like everything. She and her husband were in their seventeenth or eighteenth year of running the Meeks Bay Resort up at Lake Tahoe in the summertime as the concessionaires for that resort. That was

a big business—a big job—they had. They had lived up there for many winters too, but then had moved to live in Reno in the winter time. She had taught in California. Her husband was a retired professor/ administrator from Claremont College. This Meeks Bay thing was kind of a lark that at one point in their lives they decided they wanted to do, and they got the permit, and so now they were into it and getting toward the end of those years.

Well, she said, “I would be happy to have you bring some people up to Meeks Bay for a weekend,” on the edge of the season. I can’t remember if the first time we did it was in the fall or the spring. But we went up, and she gave us the use of the Kehlet Mansion, which is the old original mansion on the Point there at Meeks Bay and which will sleep about twelve people or something like that on its own, with four or five bedrooms, a large living room, kitchen, and deck and just a gorgeous setting.

Then she said maybe we could use another couple of the cabins, so she kind of gave me an upper limit of fifteen to twenty that we could house. She just left it up to me as to who might come. The first year I just put together a group of people that had mainly gone on the “Women on the Frontier” tour or had been working with me in Women’s Studies, but I included Ann Ronald, the Dean of Arts and Science, because I know she and her partner, Lois Snedden, are so in love with the out-of-doors. I just knew they would enjoy the setting. I also knew that she enjoyed that kind of thing, when she wasn’t necessarily being dean, when she just could be Ann Ronald.

The first time we went we had potluck on Friday night. We took care of all the food, and then Bev took care of the rooms. We slept under real sheets and blankets and went hiking during the day. The first night we just did a round robin “introduce yourself” activity. But it was just fabulous. It was that

kind of time we don't spend enough of—of just enjoying each other. We did that, I think, three different times, and I think you were there one of those times. I think it was maybe the last time.

So it started purely as a time just to enjoy. But then, as this idea of creating an organization came about, then the talk would get around to doing business, about how could we make something like this happen?

I invited Linda Duferrena to come down to Reno and do a public presentation on *her* experiences in doing oral histories. Actually, that program was sponsored by the Women's Studies Program. That was on Veteran's Day in the fall of 1995, I guess. That is the day that we spent at the Unitarian Church in our first formal exploration of creating a women's history organization, where people were formally invited to stay for the afternoon. Actually, we were going to go up to the lake to a cabin that Sally Wilkins had, but we got snowed in, in Reno—well, all of us but Linda Wyckoff, who never heard the change of plans and who spent the evening getting to the lake and sitting outside this empty place wondering what had happened to us, which was really sad. We finally connected with her the next day.

We did have this meeting at the church, and decided that we did need to organize something, and so we did. Now, I think that the organizing of it didn't officially start until the following year. We had this meeting in October, and the following February is when we called a meeting of individuals for the purpose of formally organizing the Nevada Women's History Project. That was held in a savings and loan building at Plumb Lane and Virginia, up near the Park Lane Mall. I think, that was the formal "come and show your official interest" meeting.

In the meantime, a group of us had gotten together to talk further about what kind of

animal are we talking about? And from the beginning, we felt it did not work to try to stay on campus and make it a bonafide official campus thing, because we didn't really see a logical home for it. You couldn't predict that it would fit under the Women's Studies umbrella at all. In fact, politically, that was not at all a good idea—to offer the new Chair something already made that she had to buy. I mean, it just didn't fit at that time. And we also knew some of the constraints of working within the university system, you know, bureaucratic-wise, et cetera.

We started looking at, is there another umbrella somewhere that we could have? Or do we just need to go create a non-profit organization all our own? There were a number of discussions, and I can't remember who all was in on that—certainly Sally Wilkins and Sandra Neese, to some extent.

*Yes. I was at that meeting. It was upstairs in the bank building. I can remember. Right.*

We thought if we could find another organization and we could go under their umbrella, that would just make it easier all the way around, if it worked. Well then, we started looking what that might be. That's when we arrived at the Nevada Women's Fund as being possibly appropriate. None of the other women's groups were, because once you get under their umbrella, you take on *their* flavor—period. You become A.A.U.W. or Soroptimists, so that didn't work. But the Women's Fund was real generic in its mission and it seemed like a mission that ought to have us—ought to have a base that began with a respect for the history of the women that have gone before us and the value of gathering that and disseminating it to individuals and particularly to young women coming up.



And so we went to Fritsi Ericson. I can't remember what kind of meetings—we may have had lunch together or something—but simply went to her and said, “Would this interest you at all?” Well, it did— personally first. You know, I wasn't even aware that she was on the state board of museums and history at that point in time, but she was. Her own family is an old-time Reno family, so just from a personal angle, she had her finger in history. And she loved the idea that we might be what we called “a delegate agency” under their umbrella.

They had just had another group be a delegate agency, which is called the Nevada Self-Employment Project, and now it's called Nevada Self-Employment Trust, I think. So they had had experience working with another group for three or four years at that point, and I think they had had some real problems. She knew, going in, what wouldn't work—what they didn't want to do. But she had to do quite a bit of educating with members of her board for them to think that this was a good idea to do this kind of thing again.

*Because of the bad experience?*

Well, it wasn't a bad experience. They had to make sure that they kept their own mission in line and didn't get too far afield. Anyway she, from the very beginning, just said, “Let's do it.”

She started working on her end, and we started creating some bylaws. Then we invited people to this meeting in February, at which time she actually formally said, “The Women's Fund is willing to be the umbrella. Our board has it under review, but we definitely see this as a possibility.”

We had sent out I don't know how many . . . a hundred invitations to organizations and

people. We had about thirty people there, more than the room could handle easily. It was a round conference table, and we had like two concentric rings of people all around the room. We spent most of the time with people introducing themselves, because people did come from very different backgrounds, and a variety of women's organizations were represented. Mary Petersen, the State Superintendent of Education, was there. Joan Kerschner because we also saw a *very* strong connection with the Department of Education and the state library and museums and all of that—that what we were going to do would benefit them—so we wanted some connection and their endorsement from the beginning.

That meeting was very successful, but the legislative session was going on, and so we had this idea of just going directly to the Legislature and getting a grant made to the state library or the Department of Education to fund research and writing of materials about Nevada women for the schools. We wanted to get organized quick enough to have a presence at the Legislature, so we set another meeting in Carson City about a month later. But we began to realize that we were trying to move too fast on that end of things. We ran into some people who came to that second meeting, who really came with every thought of how this would *not* work, and we had to spend most of the meeting not only allaying their fears, but keeping them from dominating the meeting so we could move forward. I mean, they were just terrible. I don't know if you were at that meeting.

*I wasn't. No.*

Oh, it was awful. They were women from a B.P.W. group [Business and Professional Women] in Reno that just had nothing good

to think about our group. They thought, somehow, a small group of people were trying to run and get a bunch of personal power for something. I mean, they weren't going to trust anybody with anything, so whatever we were doing they just were very suspicious of. They totally disrupted the meeting to the point we didn't get anything done.

In the meantime, Jan Evans was willing to get a bill drafted, and we had a draft of the bill, but there were lots of things wrong with it, so we were trying to straighten it out in a group of fifteen, which won't ever work well. We needed to have it ready so that we could testify at a hearing. We began to realize, "Wait a minute, wait a minute, this isn't going to work."

We dropped the whole legislative thing, because we realized we had to have a viable organization in place before we could have a presence at the Legislature, and because *no* one had the time to commit to working on this full-time—to try to work out all the problems that were there, including these women who just had thrown the monkey wrench into how we were even going to organize with a temporary steering committee so that we could be a democratic group. They just didn't trust anything. Basically, they never came back, and I think maybe we took them off the list, so they didn't even know when we met. I mean, they were very disruptive. Later I talked to some other people in other B.P.W. groups that knew exactly who I was talking about, without my even bringing up their names. So that was too bad.

*So it was a small segment of a B.P.W. group?*

Oh, it was basically two women who didn't understand—who just didn't have the vision and somehow thought the rest of us were trying to run with something that we didn't have any right to do.

We all were busy. Here I was in the midst of finishing out that semester, and there just were all kinds of other things going on, so we backed off. We said, "Let us start this slowly."

It was in *June* of that year that we then had a meeting at the Unitarian Church, where we elected officers. And everybody there took a position, almost, I think. Were you at that meeting?

*Yes, I think I was.*

I think you were, and Kathy Noneman came and showed a *lot* of interest, and Sylvia Ontaneda-Bernales, and everybody that was there volunteered. We filled every position to start with. Linda Wyckoff would be Treasurer and Finance. Sally Wilkins volunteered originally to be Vice-President. Lynn Bremer volunteered to be Membership Chair, and Kathy Noneman volunteered to be on the board.

Then we adopted this idea that we wanted organizational members as well as individual members. So then people started saying, "Well, I will bring my A.A.U.W. group. I'll go get them to join, and I'll be their rep." We started actually taking in dues. We did not have a firm set of bylaws, but we created by motion a dues structure, a membership to start with that one could join as an individual or as an organization, and we appointed a bylaws committee.

We had two different meetings up at Sally Wilkins's house through the summer, and we decided to have a presence in the Nevada Day parade. That just took off and created a life of its own, and we had a lot of fun with that.

We started really getting serious about what kind of organization we could be, after we came down to reality and got out of that whole legislative situation. We knew it was going to really take time to bring together

people and have them agree on a structure—a format and funding—just everything it takes to make an organization work. We did that over the next year.

My idea of what this could be had been evolving for a least a year, and it really did move. It was incredible that there was a really wonderful group of people—both women and men—that could see enough of that vision to jump on board and start helping make it happen. Then we just had to find those who could give it enough time to really formally develop the organization.

The first large membership meeting was in January of 1996 at the Health Department Auditorium in Reno. It was a combination business and program meeting, because we then had some by-laws ready for anyone who belonged as of that day to vote on. We had been basically operating under that structure since June with some concepts that we now had in place. Working on bylaws is always such a chore, but you have to have some structure so people know what it is they're joining and how it is supposed to function. And so we did that. That meeting was held in a blizzard, but we still had about sixty people in attendance.

We always said we were never going to have just business meetings—that the reason we were creating a group was to enjoy coming together around Nevada women's history. We would always have some programming, so we invited the Nevada Humanities Committee Chautauqua characters to come and other “living history” performers that hadn't worked with Nevada Humanities Committee. We had about eight or nine people who did living history characters. We didn't have enough time for a full-blown program, so we only gave them each about five or six minutes, but they were willing to come and do that, and they were wonderful. Everybody just

got so excited about *that* aspect of history—about living history, performed as those characters.

We did adopt the bylaws and basically elect the officers—most of which had been functioning. We created staggered terms, so that people would go off the board at regular times and all the rest. So that meeting was very successful.

January of 1996 also was the launching of the quarterly newsletter. We were so fortunate to have Sylvia Ontaneda-Bernales, who again had been one that had worked with me like Sheryl through the four years I was on campus. She was working on her degree—first her undergraduate and then her master's in journalism—and was active in Women Leaders of Nevada. She just became more and more connected with this group of students and community people that wanted to make something happen in this area. Her whole mission at that point—and I think it still is to some degree—was to be able to use video as a medium for documentary work on the history of women. There she was, ready to document what was going on. In fact, I had worked with her on a master's project that she did—a documentary on Nevada women in politics during the years from 1965 to 1982—where I acted as a consultant to her and then was the narrator in both versions of the video.

*And that video was aired on public television?*

Right, that video is still wonderful. It's really a great documentary of a lot of what I've been talking about—of *my* era and the people whom I worked with in making the things happen that did.

*Because she interviewed you and several others on that?*

She did, and then we actually used that video as the feature of a program sponsored by the Women's History Project soon after that and invited all the women who were still living to come. Eight or nine of them did, including one, Ruby Duncan, whom we paid her plane fare from Las Vegas to come up. We had a marvelous evening where Sylvia showed the video to our members. She talked about how you do these kinds of videos—what's involved in putting them together—and then the alumni in the video each got to share a little bit of where they were coming from now, fifteen years later.

Well, here we had Sylvia willing to be the editor of our NWHP newsletter, and that was so great to start off on such a high-quality, professional level. Through her connections with Esther Early and Esther's daughter, Jan, we connected with another Early—Tammy Early in San Diego—who heard about what we were doing and volunteered to design a logo for us for that newsletter. It was going to be a year and a half later that we would meet her, but she just did such a great job and came up with several ideas that we liked.

The first newsletter just hit the ground running and was very well done and, I think, was about twelve pages. (I can't remember.) That newsletter has continued to come out quarterly, and it's probably one of the strongest things that we have done. For many people, it's their reason for belonging—simply to get that newsletter. They don't have the time nor desire to give a lot of money and time in projects, but the newsletter gives them enough that they feel like they want to support what the group is all about. Although the newsletter is on its third editor, it continues to be, I think, high quality. Joan Morrow came in to be editor when Sylvia just had to drop it because of finishing up her degree programs and some other responsibilities she had. Now, the editor

is a Las Vegas graphics communications specialist by training, Carolyn Hamilton-Procter. She just came out with her first issue as editor and will be continuing, hopefully for awhile.

What have we done? Well, we agreed early on about a mission statement. We've never argued or talked about changing it. It's just there and has worked for us really well: "Providing visibility and support for the gathering and dissemination of history about the roles and contributions of Nevada women of every race, class and ethnic background."

From the very beginning, that latter part we felt very strongly about, even though we were primarily lily white. Sylvia is Peruvian. We've had a couple of black members. Kitty Rowe Roberts from Sparks, who worked with us on several committees the first year is really the only black member that's been active to any degree. We do have other black members; we have several Native American members. We have not, to any degree, gotten the kind of "women of color" representation in the organization that we would like. That's certainly one of the things for the group to look at for the future. Still, in the research projects that we've sponsored and done, we have started pulling together files of all we can find about women of color in the state. And we still hope to write a grant and get some people going in a major way on that as a project.

We extended the membership option to people statewide, all over, and our first newsletter went all over the state to about 500 or 600 people. We started gaining memberships right away and have continued to grow. We're now at the point where we've changed the fiscal year and we've increased the dues. We are now at the second round where people need to renew their dues, and we are having some drop-off at this point. The

first go-around we had almost a 100 percent renewal of dues. It was just very gratifying. I think we would again if we had people calling and talking with the people that are on the list. We haven't had as strong a membership service committee as we needed to cultivate those members.

The leadership in southern Nevada has not been able to really pull together into as cohesive a group as we need down there to function, so they have not had as much programming. If one doesn't see much going on, then one has to establish priorities on how many of these groups you're going to belong to. The membership currently is down from that growth spurt, but I think it's quite capable of going back up again with the right kind of people working on these things.

People have participated in a wide range of things. One is workshops: how to do oral histories; how to preserve your own family materials; how to do basic research. All of those have been conducted by excellent professional people and they have all been widely attended and have made money for us. We charge a little bit extra beyond what it costs to put them on, and they are still very much needed in a whole range of ways.

"Research Round Table" was a scheme that we felt was a good idea from the beginning. It has now been going on for a year and a half in the north. Once a month people come together and listen to somebody tell about what research they are doing, and it can be a non-academic approach, a family history. It can be someone who is finishing up on a dissertation telling the process by which they got their sources. It can be someone reviewing a book they just finished; someone dreaming about the book they want to do and how they would go about it. It's been great fun. The numbers attending have never been big, I think partially because we've called it a

"Research Round Table." I think if we'd called it a lecture series we might have drawn more people, but that might have intimidated some of the people who spoke. [laughter] So we're just playing with what works—different ways. But those of us who've been at the "Research Round Table" have thoroughly enjoyed them.

We felt early on we had to connect with the schools. It turns out that as we have connected with librarians and teachers, that the *need* for us to work with them is so overwhelming that it has drawn *most* of our work in that direction. Where we were trying out a lot of different ideas, we now feel the major focus of the work should be toward education and teachers and what goes on in the classroom; that while we enjoy doing a lot of these things, the main thing is to create products that are going to get used in the schools in the future.

Out of that came the Book Assessment Project, where we reviewed all the books we could get our hands on about Nevada to see which ones had women in them. We had over ninety people work on that a year ago. Out of that we published and disseminated at our conference a bibliography of published sources about Nevada women. It was just a simple author, title, publisher kind of listing, but very valuable to teachers and librarians. We are in the next stage of that right now, which is developing annotations for each of those listings and putting it on the internet, hopefully, as well as in a hard-copy form that will be extremely useful to teachers and researchers, one that gives them real clues about where to find existing material about Nevada women. It also helps researchers look at what hasn't been done, so that they can move in the direction of research and publishing for new information. We're toward the end of that second phase, and the university is helping with the technical end of things—getting it all on the computer.



We got a grant to work on *another* project with the university to put women's biographies on the internet. But they are now interested in this other project—the bibliography—and perhaps putting it on the internet as well. That fits right in with the mission that the Legislature has given to the University Instructional Media Services, to provide technical assistance to schools throughout Nevada so that they can make use of the internet as an educational tool. We were right in a good position. We're delivering the content to people who know how to put it into the system.

Now, the next stage is for teachers to know that it exists, so then teacher training becomes another major element of our future. We've done one in-service workshop organized by Sally Wilkins a year ago—very successful—for thirty-five teachers who taught from kindergarten through high school and just showed them what materials are out there right now: what videos are available; what people perform as living history performers that just need a phone call; how could they develop this material in the classroom for their age level—all of that.

We've done one workshop. We have another one scheduled now in the spring of 1998 that will be for everyone, but particularly teachers in northern Nevada, on how to access our biographies on the internet and that will be done with the College of Education and will be taught by Dana Bennett, one of our members.

The grant we got from the university enabled us to start putting women's biographies on the internet. We developed a proposal and got about a \$6,000 grant which enabled us to pay the key people to start writing the biographies so we would have some continuum of quality in that product. Ninety-nine percent of what we've done up

until now has been with volunteers, but it's just a reality that some people have to get paid for what they're doing because it's part of how they're earning a living. That works well—we just have to be able to write more grants, because the money is out there to pay people to do that. Others don't want to be tied down to long-term commitments and are willing to give their skills on a part-time basis, so it's a mixture of volunteer and paid work, and that seems to have worked real well.

We thought we were going to maybe run into a bunch of problems with people getting jealous of who was getting paid to do something and who was working as a volunteer, and that hasn't emerged at all. I mean, whatever works. I know we could raise a lot more money if we had people who could commit to the grant writing so that we could do more and pay people to do it at the same time—there's nothing wrong with that.

The web site is up and running. We have thirty-four women's biographies on it now—a brief description of their lives called "At a Glance," and then from two to eight or nine pages (if you were to do it in hard copy) of biography of the woman. Most of them are written chronologically from their early days to a listing of the accomplishments they achieved while in Nevada. They are all deceased. Our criteria was simply: we wanted at least two from every county in the state; we wanted women who were just representative of the women who have lived in those areas of the state and the kinds of work that they have done—the area of focus. So we have a wide range of women in the arts, in mining and ranching, in law and medicine, in education. It isn't just about that aspect of their life; it's about their family and how they saw themselves as women if we can find that. We've tried as much as possible to include the women's own words in some aspect of

the biography—excerpts from journals or diaries, letters to the editor which they wrote, speeches they gave—so that one just doesn't take what somebody else *thinks* their life was all about, but you learn about them directly through their words.

The web site project will go on forever. We've realized now that it's like a marriage when you have your own home page and site on the internet: you have to be able to maintain it; you have to be able to make corrections if you see there are errors; you have to add more things to it to keep it up to date. Currently, we are listed in several search engines that work around the internet, like *Yahoo*, for instance. Out of that, my e-mail address has been given as a point of contact. We have had several contacts from people all over the world that have seen our site and want to access it or are offering suggestions or want us to join their site, so we're now a part of that big world of the internet. That's a serious responsibility—the issue of who is going to help us maintain that and add to it.

Then we've taken our interest in women's history and done just what I call "fun things." I mean, all of it has been fun, but we decided why not combine hiking and history. So last June Bev Hubbard said, "I'll fix supper for up to a dozen people if they want to come to Meeks Bay and spend the night, and then we'll go hiking." We had discovered, in our book assessments, a book written by a woman botanist about other women botanists in Nevada. None of us knew about them, so we had different people review those women's lives while hiking up at Tahoe on the trail, and that was so much fun. There were about twelve of us that came together and, in this case, some husbands and teenage children came along. It was just a really fun way of getting together around several common interests—wildflowers, the out-of-doors, and women's history.

A lot of people are really interested in getting involved but think they are not good enough to do research—that somehow they need to have a degree behind their name, or because they didn't do it in college, they can't do it now. So we put together a trip down to the Bancroft Library in Berkeley, which is a marvelous research library on the University of California campus and has an incredible amount of Nevada primary source materials: papers, manuscripts, journals, correspondence and photographs, including the significant collection of all the papers of Anne Martin, who was our primary star leader in the Nevada suffrage campaign, in its *final* campaign from 1912 to 1914. We had this idea again of just combining fun with learning more, so we publicized this trip. Anne Howard, professor of English and biographer of Anne Martin, had spent an incredible amount of time at the Bancroft pouring over the Anne Martin papers in order to write the biography called *The Long Campaign*. (Which has just gone out of print, by the way. It was published by the University of Nevada Press, so I hope they will see fit to reprint that at some point.) We asked her if she would be our mentor for the trip and help us learn more about how you work in a research library like that, and so she did. She was just fabulous.

We made the contact administratively with the current Director. Anne raves about how we just got the red-carpet treatment. She just couldn't believe that we could get that kind of treatment from any library, but I just called and said, "There's going to be maybe a dozen of us from Nevada. We're researching Nevada women. We want to learn more of what the Bancroft has to offer." They gave us their internet site access number, so that we could actually have a session on campus and access that site here and get a feel for the kinds of papers they

had. And we developed a laundry list of things we wanted to look at before we ever got there.

They said, "Well, if you send that to us in advance, some of our papers are at other locations, and we will have here what you have asked for." And they did. All of us had this list of things. A mother-daughter combination, Alice Downer and Kay Sanders, wanted to research Bodie, which is part of their family history. They found several references to materials about Bodie in the collection. Others wanted to research Washoe Indians. Kathy Noneman and Roz Works and I wanted to look at the Anne Martin papers and the Mabel Vernon papers, because we were working on our next saga that we'd gotten a grant to do, our next drama that we were taking into rural Nevada in the fall, so we wanted to research things that were there. Oh, just incredible things. All the letters between Mabel Vernon and the ladies in Austin, Ely, Tonopah and Eureka that were working on suffrage and all their trials and tribulations of trying to make that happen and get the men to vote yes. It was, oh, wonderful stuff.

Sally Wilkins had lived in the Oakland/Berkeley area for a number of years. She had a lot of contacts and arranged home hospitality for all of us in three or four homes. So we connected with women in the Oakland area that were like us, that cared about history and community. We had a potluck in one of their homes on the second night. The first night we all went out to dinner down on the Bay, and just had so much fun. We car pooled down in two cars.

A member of the History Project that we'd never met, whose parents lived in Tonopah in the fifties—she is now a writer in the Bay Area and had joined us just by mail, by hearing about it from somebody and getting the newsletter—she joined us at the Bancroft and then for dinner and then acted as our

guide on Sunday morning when we ended up at the Maritime Museum at a special exhibit on "Women at Sea".

We just did all these fun things like touring the Bay Area around women's history and getting to know members that we had that lived there, getting to know Sally's friends, and then meeting Anne at the Bancroft and spending just an incredible day, each of us wanting everybody to come and look at the materials or photographs we were looking at. The Bancroft staff had everything ready on carts when we arrived, and they didn't even make us check them out one by one at the desk. [laughter] They gave us a whole corner of the research area. Down there they give you a place mat, which is your reservation of a table area with a chair. Then if you're up moving around, looking at things or at the copy machine or whatever, you still have your spot reserved. So everybody got a place mat, and they steered us to two or three tables that were all ours. They just pulled in these carts of materials that we'd asked for, and we just spent the day reveling in them.

We wanted copies of lots of things, so we had to jump through their hoops of filling out forms and paying the money in advance and all that, which was not onerous at all, but had to be done. We did make copies of a lot of things and *everybody* found something that they had gone to find. It was just so much fun. We'd like to go back, and there were loads of people who wanted to go who couldn't. We envision doing that at the Huntington in the Pasadena area and the Salt Lake City LDS Library or the California State Library and Archives in Sacramento. So there are just many other places that we could extend the research and combine collegiality and fun at the same time.

In the meantime, we've had general meetings where we've had speakers, and one of

our own members, Kathleen Dickinson, shared her knowledge of analysis of handwriting. We loved bringing in primary source documents of women in Nevada history and having her tell us what their personalities were like, based on their handwriting. It has been a wonderful organization for a lot of people who have made new friends; who have found avocations and projects; who have discovered skills they didn't know they had; who have had opportunities to lead, if they wanted that.

In fact, our biggest problem is not enough people willing to take positions of leadership because they are just too tied up in their other priorities. The group exists today but is looking at how it can continue to function.

In the meantime, we created our own office. Of course, it was a *great* advantage for me to have the Women's Studies office on campus as the headquarters for the Nevada Women's History Project for the first year, actually. We were able to work out of the university campus, although we developed our own bank account and paid the direct expenses with our own money from dues. But that last semester that I was on campus and managing the mail and other administrative things while Jenny Ring came in and got her feet on the ground with her work, I knew that I was going to have to give that office up in June of 1996. We put in the spring newsletter a notice of our need to find a home, and that was a major thing, because home was going to mean rent and more expenses and a *lot* of things.

A good friend [laughter] of the organization came forward. Sherri Rice, who had just started managing the YWCA in an effort to help the "Y" find its own way to continue as an organization in the community, called. Now, she was a member of the History Project. She had joined early on and had been a student of mine in Women's Studies 101—that's how we had met. She said, "Well, why don't you

come over and look at some space we have, and I think it would be to our advantage to have you in our place if it could work out."

I went over to the YWCA and looked at this absolutely marvelous three-room suite that she offered us for a really modest amount of rent, less than she could get for it from others, I believe, and she just said, "I think that your organization is compatible with what the 'Y' is all about, and I can't guarantee you *anything*. In fact, I can't guarantee you even six months, but it looks like that our future is such that we'll be here at least six months."

*Because that's when the YWCA was going through a tremendous dilemma regarding its future?*

Right. Yes, that was right in the heart of the major issues of what is going to be the future of the "Y". We had another offer from another member who had moved to California and had leased an office here in town that she was sharing with someone else, and that was downtown in an office building near Fritsi and the Women's Fund. We also explored whether we could go in with the Women's Fund, but they had no room for us. We didn't have enough money to say we can be around forever. So it was a risk, but it looked like the space at the "Y" was much better for about the same amount of money than the one downtown.

*And parking and everything is so good here.*

Everything. I mean, it was just a perfect location. We had a board meeting over there and very quickly said "yes" and moved in June of 1996 and were even able to use some desks and tables and things they had left. We moved in and had our own space.

In the meantime, I had personally purchased a copy machine, because I cannot function

without a copy machine nearby. Women's Studies was moved from the University Inn over to this apartment house, and I was a block away from a copy machine, so I just personally bought a copy machine. I moved it over for use by the History Project. I also was able to continue to use the computer from the campus on loan, because I was still working on the manuscript for the Nevada Women's Archives research project. There were enough legitimate connections that they gave me permission to use the word processor for the time being, but I also needed a printer, and so I bought a laser printer, personally, and moved that over. Jenny Ring started with her own new set of computers and things in the Women's Studies office.

The NWHP office turned out to be a perfect spot. One room is large enough to have board meetings, small workshops and committee meetings; one room is a good work room; and another one is good for a little privacy as an office for telephone conversations and other things. It's a perfect location, and the "Y" has been absolutely fabulous and now has worked out an arrangement where the city actually has purchased the building with a lease-back of a portion of it to the "Y" to continue to run, and that happens to be the portion we're in. At least through this coming June of 1998, we have a home there. I think we don't know what is the future beyond that. In the meantime, we have to look at long-range finance, fundraising, and how we can continue to function and grow and do the things we want to do.

On another note: I retired at the end of June 1997 from my two-year stint as the founding Chair of NWHP. I was the Chair in its organizing year. Then when we went into staggered terms, it worked out that my term would end in June of 1997, and Kathy Noneman came in as the new Chair of the northern region. We also had created

a statewide structure—an umbrella—that enabled us to coordinate what was happening north and south. Kay Sanders, who came on as Co-chair with me the second year that I was Chair, has moved into that position as statewide Chair.

Well, actually, there have been a couple of things. I moved in July off of the board. We were then exploring whether or not we could raise the money so that I could continue as a part-time paid person, because that was what I saw I would like to do—that I wanted to continue to help make this dream come alive. I was willing to also volunteer. Everything I'd done up to this point was volunteer. Again, I was giving far more time than you can really expect a volunteer to give, but that's where I was at that point in my life, and I wanted to do it. But I knew that you couldn't find other people to give that kind of time; it's just not realistic. The group was growing and adding to its responsibilities and really couldn't continue to do everything it was doing without some paid assistance. So I was willing to do that for a small amount of money—to be part-time State Coordinator, which is the title we came up with. We actually started paying me to do that in September, with a four-month trial basis.

The very week that we agreed to start doing that was the week that I received the diagnosis of pancreatic cancer. And so the world has been in kind of a topsy-turvy manner since that point in time, but we'll come back to that. I have continued as part-time State Coordinator through next week [last week of December 1997], and then I have said that I cannot make a commitment to continue in that position because I simply do not know what my future holds, and it's not fair to the organization either.

I didn't mention the state conference, and that was the other just major, major thing we did this last spring. That put us on the map as a group that was alive and well and had all kinds



of potential for the future. We had a two-day Nevada Women's History Conference in March in Reno. Kay and I co-chaired the conference. We had a planning committee of about twenty-five people, both north and south. It was extremely successful, and we hoped one would be held in the spring in Las Vegas this next year to carry on the tradition. Actually, the southern Nevada people are working with Nevada Women's Lobby to jointly sponsor a conference in March 1998 at UNLV, and its theme will be "Living the Legacy—Leading for Change." Part of it will be to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Women's Rights Movement nationwide, going back to Seneca Falls in 1848. So there are planning committees, and people are working on that now. Connecting with the Women's Lobby is a very good idea. It's a more issue-oriented advocacy organization, but again, that fits just like we fit with Nevada Women's Fund. We bring historical perspective and context to all of those issues, and it strengthens their movement to know where these women have come from before us who were working on women's rights and women's history. So that will be good.

Kay, then, moved onto the State Board and was actually elected the State Chair of the organization by the State Board, which is three people from the north and three from the south of existing officers. As of mid-January, she has decided that she can make a commitment to become the State Coordinator through April, and the State Board has agreed to hire her, taking the position I had. We are so lucky that she's willing to make that commitment.

The organization continues to be in a state of change, and there's a tremendous amount of leadership needed. We've created a success, now we need a lot of people to help continue it, and I think that will happen.

*It's an organization that has survived all those infancy stages. It's now into getting to the*

*mature stage of needing to be directed through projects and such?*

Right. And it needs some continuing staff, partially to help organize the volunteers that do want to work. We have learned that we can raise money through grants, and we've been very successful. Several that we've written have enabled us to do some really tangible outcomes—productive outcomes—that show our value, so I think it's very doable. It's just a matter of finding the people that can do the work.

The other thing this fall, which was a brand new element, was adding a series of products we ourselves could sell to share with women the story of Nevada women in history. We identified a historic photo that we felt was a good one to start with for a series of historic postcards; produced a booklet of biographies of four of the women that are on the internet; and created some note paper that people can use for correspondence and send as gifts that has twelve different Nevada women on it and three pictures on the cover. We've started adding another whole element that we can make available to teachers and others, so it goes on and on.

I guess the last project that I should mention is one that we're doing with Sandy Miller, because it's one of those that I still intend to keep my finger in as long as I can. Sandy Miller, the Governor's wife, has long been doing research on the men and women who lived in the Governor's mansion as children, but without any real ideas as to what she was going to do with it when she got done. Along the way, camera crews at Truckee Meadows Community College offered to go with her and actually video these interviews, so for many of them, she has a video of the interview. She got started on this as she dealt with the thousands of school children that

come to the mansion every year. They wanted to know: Did kids live in the mansion? Did they have pets? And how did things work out for them? You know, they aren't as interested in what kind of brocade the drapes are made out of, or what era they came from, or what Governor did what; they're interested in different things. She wanted to be able to give them the stories about the children that had lived in the mansion, so she set out to find out what they were.

Guy Rocha, the State Archivist, and others put together a list for her of the Governors who lived in the mansion who had children, one of which was born there, and the others lived there during the time their father was Governor. They put together a list for her of those who were still living, and she just started contacting them.

She has now interviewed almost everyone that is interviewable—still alive and around—and that adds up to close to thirty individuals. Those tapes have not been transcribed, for the most part, but there are video interviews of all of these. Now, she walks around with all of these anecdotes in her head and just loves steering you through the mansion and telling you what happened: where the pet frogs were kept and another time a pet alligator; what went on in the attic; what went on in the basement; and just who slid down what tree outside of what bedroom. It's just incredible—all the wonderful stories she has about the children who lived in the mansion.

At some point she came to me, because our paths crossed frequently, and just told me what she was doing and said, "I think I need help on what to do with all this." So I went to the History Project and said, "I think we need to help Sandy Miller." We are in the process of sitting down with her and looking at how what she has can result in a guide for teachers that could go with the video condensed down to like a thirty-minute

version for use in classrooms, as well as more extensive information about the children who lived in the mansion to go with the story of the mansion and the Governors and their wives. We may come up with several products that would come out of this—books and teachers' curriculum materials and videos.

We had one fundraiser this fall at the mansion, to start building some money for those products, in which we invited people to come and bring their children and tour the mansion. We had docents, who had toured it with Sandy, stationed at all the rooms, and it was just very successful. About 150 people came and learned about the NWHP and enjoyed the mansion. They're going to do something similar in Las Vegas this spring. They're going to have Sandy at a tea to talk about the mansion and her interviews and to raise some money. So that's a project that's yet to be finalized. Patt Quinn-Davis, a journalist NWHP member who lives in Carson City, is taking the lead on developing materials for the schools.

*You've given a number of examples here of the variety of projects that really come together at NWHP through individual member's interests.*

Yes, yes, yes, yes! Right. Right. So how do I feel about the Women's History Project? It's great . . . [crying]

*You said earlier something about this being your baby. This one's a hard one, isn't it? [Pause] OK, we've taken a break from the tape. We hit on an emotional point about the Nevada Women's History Project, and we stopped to discuss it. We've agreed that what we're going to do is come back at a later time when we're talking about things that Jean would like to see accomplished—things that are unfinished, and we're going to address what was so emotional at this point. So we will come back to that.*



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## OTHER PROJECTS, OTHER INTERESTS

*For the rest of today's interview, we want to talk about some miscellaneous projects that Jean was involved in in the 1990s.*

Well, I was thinking about other things I was doing with my life, and there were several that I wouldn't want to leave out. One was working on the Tahoe Rim Trail. When I moved up here in 1985, I think they just started that project. This is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to create a hiking and riding trail all around Lake Tahoe, up at the upper elevations and using some existing pieces of trail. Some of it on the southwest side, for instance, is the Pacific Crest Trail.

They did a lot of designing and came up with this plan for a trail around the top and then set out to find volunteers to help do most of the labor. Quite a complex organization is involved in getting all the government permits to move through state land, private land, federal land, city land—all kinds of stuff. It's an incredible project and it's close to being done. I think they thought it was

going to be close to being done when I came up in 1986, but eleven years later, they're still working on it.

For about three summers in the early nineties, I worked on the trail in the Nevada State Park section just west of Carson City, like you can almost look up from my house in Carson and see it all. You can't see the area I worked on because we were down beyond the ridge toward the lake, but it was in that area. Sometimes we hiked in to work on the trail; other times we would be taken in by the kinds of buses they used to transport firefighters into remote areas. There were trained people who told the rest of us what to do, but we did all kinds of things from digging rocks out of the path of the trail, to spreading sand, to trimming branches, to placing markers. Just whatever your strength and physical skill might be, there was a job that you could do. People brought their own lunch. We stayed all day. Oh, just a *wonderful* experience to be able to feel like you're part of leaving this for the enjoyment of others coming along. So for three summers I did that multiple

days. Sometimes they would offer camp-outs where you actually go up and spend a week, and I never could put enough days together to do that at the right time. Several of my friends did it with me, off and on, and I just really look back at that and wish I could have done more. It was another big non-profit organization that I'm sure has all those trials and tribulations, and I never got involved in the running of the organization but have continued to pay dues to be a supporter of it and just find it a very worthwhile project.

I've always had an interest in wildflowers and had been hiking on my own and then leading other people in hikes. Actually, one of the selfish reasons for working on the rim trail is that I was taken by a vehicle up into the really high country. That, right now, is a little further than I want to walk on one stretch, so it got me into high country that I probably wouldn't have hiked into otherwise.

That part of the trail is all done now through Nevada State Parks, but now they have what they call maintenance crews that go back to make sure it's all still staying in place. And so still, once or twice a summer, they will offer the day where you get to ride in on fire trails that take you fairly close to where the work is going on, and so I've always wanted to continue to do that.

When I think of Lake Tahoe, I also think of just culture and all of the music, drama, and art opportunities—not just there but all over northern Nevada. I particularly remember wonderful times at the Tallac historic site on the south shore—Valhalla, the wonderful hall there in which they sponsored jazz concerts. It used to be just a few, and now they go weekly all summer long, practically. I had my favorite jazz groups. Tom Delaney was one that I think three years in a row I was there to hear his kind of soft jazz concert in Valhalla and take a picnic supper.

Chamber music I've always loved, and I never had taken the time to really be a regular attendee of the symphony or the opera, but I have been to many, many chamber concerts up at Nightingale Hall [University of Nevada, Reno campus] and other places all around the lake. Maybe that goes back to my days of playing in a double string quartet.

And then art. I've been a patron of the arts. I've *never* looked at myself as an artist in any way, other than maybe photography, in terms of being able to do a pretty good job at framing pictures with the camera. But I started collecting Nevada watercolors way back in the sixties in Las Vegas, and now my living room is literally covered with watercolor paintings, to the extent that I've had to go to miniatures in recent years [laughter] in order to have a space to put anything new up. So I've enjoyed art—art galleries, art openings, and pottery. Fiber arts, particularly, I have followed the people who do that with admiration and enjoyment.

A couple of other events that are along this line—one is Chautauqua which was a revival of a eastern practice in the late 1800s of people coming together under a large tent in a field or a park in the summertime and hearing programming from dramatic presentations to lectures to elocution of various kinds. Clay Jenkinson and the Nevada Humanities Committee brought Chautauqua to northern Nevada in its most recent life about six years ago, I guess, and started with a very ambitious program at Rancho San Rafael for four or five nights in a row under a big tent. I was there for the first one whose theme was "Water in the West," and all the characters had something to do with history of water. Clay played John Wesley Powell. There were some Nevada characters in that Chautauqua: Mrs. Hugh Brown from Tonopah and Mrs. Loy Ford and some others. That's when I was just getting into



the women's history bit, and so I just sat with my mouth open and enjoyed and admired the Chautauqua performers, people who were scholars who would get so enmeshed in someone's life that they could relive that person as if he or she were alive, talking and sharing concepts and ideas and elements of their lives. So I became a strong Chautauqua fan. I think there was one summer that I missed maybe two performances, and other than that, I have been there every night, every year, practically on the front row.

I would often help with the other programming at Chautauqua, which was around policy making kinds of issues, and questions and dialogues which would go on during the day relating to the theme. So I was able to make a contribution to that element of it. I also started designing a field trip for Steve Tchudi and Steve Lafer, both professors on campus who started an innovative class called "Reading and Writing the West." They tied one week of it to Chautauqua, and they always planned a student field trip—again relating to the theme—to somewhere in northern Nevada, and I was fortunate to design the first one for them. They kept asking me to come back, so for five or six years, I've designed the one-day field trip to various places in northern Nevada that fit with the theme of Chautauqua. That has ranged from down to Genoa and Virginia City to Bowers Mansion.

This last year, the theme was Science, Technology, and Human Values. So we went to Lovelock, of all places, and visited a modern-day gold mine and a modern-day ranch and learned about high-tech alfalfa seed cultivation and then ended with a historic perspective at the Marsden House Museum. Planning and leading those tours every summer in connection with Chautauqua was another joy.

Another cultural activity—one that few thought at the beginning was a cultural activity—was cowboy poetry. That emerged in the winter of 1985. Maxine, my tour company partner, and I first connected with that in 1984. A group of cowboys came to Las Vegas called the Cowboy Tour. It was a traveling program by cowboy poets and musicians, sponsored by the National Endowment for the Folk Arts. It came to the Clark County Library, and they performed on a big outdoor platform in the parking lot. At that Cowboy Tour, we heard them announce that there was going to be something called a Cowboy Poetry Gathering in Elko, Nevada, of all places, the following January. Maxine and I had our tour company, and we were always looking for places to take people. So we thought, "Oh! we've got to go."

We got the name of the person who was in charge, a man named Hal Cannon. He was, at that point, living in Sun Valley, Idaho and working on this grant, although he was from Salt Lake City and the Western Folklife Center there. He told us about this plan. It was the third year of a three-year extensive grant that his group had gotten from the National Endowment—I think from the Folk Arts again or maybe the humanities or the fine arts were involved as well. I'm not sure. For two years, they had been exploring in the West to see whether or not there were cowboy poets; if so, where were they, what did they do?

The folklorists, which were people in most states attached to the state arts council, were the core of the researchers that were being paid by this grant. They would come together annually and explore what they had found. The grant called for them in the third year to identify some of the poets they had found and bring them together in a gathering and have them share their poetry. So this was what the Cowboy Poetry Gathering was going to be. It

was a pretty in-house kind of event. It wasn't for public entertainment, necessarily, at all. It was to end this research grant.

Their budget would allow them to bring about fifty poets from all over the West—from North Dakota and Texas to Washington and Arizona—all to Elko. They were planning to have it there because Hal Cannon, himself, had done the research in Nevada. We didn't have something called a folklorist with our arts council at that point in time. So he did the work, and he found all these cowboy poets in Nevada. (Let me say right here that that included women, and they never wanted to be called cowgirls; cowboy poetry meant men and women together even if they were feminist poets.) Hal also just fell in love with Elko and said this is the perfect town to bring poets together and have a meeting.

So they planned this gathering in the convention center at the end of January 1985, and they picked their people to invite. He told us all of this, so we said, "Whoa, we have a tour company, and we want to bring a tour."

He said, "Great!" And so we kept in touch. We started publicizing it, and we got about six people to go on our tour. We had a fabulous time.

In the meantime, while we kept in touch with Hal Cannon, all of a sudden he realized he was in the travel business, because now he was having to schedule all these poets and their families and friends that wanted to come. Then the media started finding out about this and they would start calling and saying, "We're from the L.A. *Times*, and we'd like to come to this gathering—how can we do that?"

He was into all of this and in over his head because he was a scholar; he was a poet—a folklorist. Somehow we reconnected with him, and he said to us, "Why don't you take over the travel arrangements for this group?" And we said, "We'd *love* to."

We weren't as much into *that* kind of travel business, but we learned real quick. What we did is find out the schedules and everything. There weren't too many ways you could get into Elko in late January. One was to drive, and people had that option; they could drive and they'd be paid their mileage. Another was to fly, and there was like two planes a day, I think, into Elko at that point from Salt Lake or Ely or Reno. Then the other was to take the train, which came through also once or twice a day from Salt Lake or Reno. That was about it. There was no bus service.

His first goal was to get his invited poets and his folklorists there, all of whom were being paid out of his budget—one big account. And so we started working with those people, and we became very knowledgeable about what their options were. We made all their reservations. We had a big group building up that were going to fly or drive into Salt Lake and then take the train from Salt Lake; that appeared to be the best way to get into Elko—was to take the train. Some of them, I guess, got on the train even earlier than Salt Lake City, but the poets only came from as far east as Colorado.

Then another group—a smaller number—we booked to take the train from Reno to Elko. These would have been poets living in California, western Nevada, Oregon. Then there were a lot of them that simply drove. But we ended up being in the inner circle of planning and carrying out the first Cowboy Poetry Gathering.

Our tour started in Las Vegas, and we took an overnight Pullman train from Las Vegas to Salt Lake with our people. The next morning is when the poets started gathering at the Palace of Fine Arts in Salt Lake City, which is right down the street from the train station, not too far from Temple Square. None of the poets knew each other. In fact, many of them

had hardly been off the ranch. They did know the folklorist that had discovered them, and the folklorists knew each other because they'd been working on this project for two years.

Here came all these people with guitar cases and banjos, and all manner of dress. I mean, it was just incredible experience. Many brought their families, who paid their own way. So anyway, Maxine and I had eighty-nine people scheduled to leave on the train from Salt Lake City at 11:30 that night for Elko, and during the day, these people started arriving. We got there in time to be there to greet everybody. There was a big reception in the Palace of Fine Arts, which is just an elegant place, and everybody was in full cowboy dress, whatever that meant to them. For some it was really rugged looking jeans, but for all of them it was a bright scarf of some kind and a different way of tying it, and boots and hats and—oh, the dusters, long dusters. The media didn't know where to turn. I mean, they just felt like they had died and gone to heaven, because it was just one media opportunity after another with all of these interesting looking people.

It snowed. There was a huge blizzard all day long, and when we got ready to leave this reception put on by the Utah Arts Council, which was just the most elegant thing with these people looking elegant but in a different way, you know, than many of us were used to. We walked en masse to the train, and Maxine and I checked all eighty-nine of them in. We rode the train to Elko, which got in about 4:30 in the morning.

We were spread out throughout this train. In *every* car there was a jam session going on. People pulled out their instruments, and the news reporters were just all over the place trying to figure out who to talk with next. People were getting acquainted with each other, and the bar was overflowing, and it was

just an incredible experience. Because it was so cold, the train had to go very slow. There is some effect upon the train on the rails when it's around zero. So we got into Elko at about 4:30 in the morning.

Hal had a real challenge getting ready for the Cowboy Poetry Gathering to be in Elko that first year. Elko was not used to a big, big convention. They had a wonderful convention center, but they hadn't had a lot of business using it. Like, they didn't have buses, and so he finally got school buses to come down to the train station and commandeered any one that he could find that could volunteer vans and trucks and everything to haul all these people to their various hotels. Again, this had been a challenge to get them all booked in and to the right places, but he did. So he and his host committee folks gathered us all up and took us to all the hotels.

That morning, the Cowboy Poetry Gathering started. We got there about 4:30 a.m., and it started about 10:00 a.m. In the meantime, our group from Reno had arrived much earlier than us—like around midnight, or something. Janie Young, who later was to become my Deputy Director of Community Services, at that point, led our group of cowboys from Reno to Elko. They had already gotten their rooms—even gotten a few hours sleep—by the time we got into town.

That year we had put together a package that included the ticket to the gathering, which was one ticket for the whole three days of poetry sessions; a Basque dinner at a Basque restaurant; and then tours—out to Lamoille, if the weather permitted, or go to the chariot races in nearby Wells, and some other things. So we had Poetry Gathering attendees take us up on various aspects of that. We had almost 300 people take us up on the Basque dinner, so we had arranged with Biltoki's (the largest Basque restaurant in Elko) for us to take

over the restaurant for the entire evening the second night of the gathering. We had three seatings—like one at 5:00 p.m. and another at 6:30 p.m. and another at 8:00 p.m. We got all of our 300 people seated and had their family-style Basque dinner.

At the end of that gathering, there was a session that raised the question, where do we go from here?—a good evaluating session that every project like that has. And the unanimous opinion was: Will we come back next year? Of course. We can't let this stop. There was *huge* agreement that it was an incredible activity that needed to be preserved and enhanced and promoted. So a planning committee was put together, much beyond the group that had had this grant, to look at the realities of making a Cowboy Poetry Gathering continue without the funding of a grant. It did come back the following year, and this coming January [1998] will be its fourteenth year.

I have been to all of them but one. For quite a few years there, even when I was working in Carson, I would just take personal leave and would take vacation time and would go just as a spectator. When I worked for Bill Thornton, I put together a motor coach tour, and we took Nevadans as paying customers. But it's an event that does not really want groups. It isn't tailored to groups; they don't need groups. They sell out all the rooms so quickly that they don't even want to see a group coming that ties up twenty, twenty-five rooms at a time, so it's really hard to take a group.

In the last five years, I have been back several times where each year I took somebody who had never been. One year was Lynn Bremer; another year was Beverly Hubbard; another year was Sally Wilkins; another was Sylvia Ontaneda-Bernales. And we connected with others there. There is a hard-core group

of Nevadans who wouldn't miss the Cowboy Poetry Gathering, and you can just count on seeing them there. Each time we stayed with friends or in a hotel, and I was able to introduce my companions to this just incredible happening. Hal Cannon eventually moved to Nevada. He married a poet named Teresa Jordan, who was the keynote speaker one year. Out of that, she and Hal connected, eventually got married, and they live on their own little ranch property out at the base of the mountains south of Elko.

The Western Folklife Center now actually has its home in Elko due to the granting of a building to them by George Gund. It is a major cultural non-profit organization in northeastern Nevada that is struggling to come up to its potential and do the fundraising and get the support for being a year-round cultural institution. They tried having a music gathering in the summertime, which for some reason did not go as well as the winter gathering. But the winter gathering has now spread out to two weekends—about ten, twelve days altogether—in order to accommodate everyone, because the capacity of Elko for the gathering is about eight thousand people at one time in terms of rooms. I think that's counting rooms in Carlin and maybe Wells, and maybe even Battle Mountain. I don't know.

*Battle Mountain, I think I've heard some say.*

Right. By the time it ends one year, it's all booked for the next. People have talked about moving it to Salt Lake or Boise or other places, but I don't think that will ever happen, and it shouldn't. It should stay. It should not get bigger. They have done an incredible job of maintaining the quality of that event to where it isn't a big commercial entertainment show. I mean, it is entertaining, and they have gotten

good grants from people like Levi Strauss and The Nevada Arts Council. Plenty of people are helping sponsor it so they can keep it very low-cost to the people who come. It's a world-class event that goes on in Nevada that is just fun to have here, and I look with strong, warm memories to all of my involvement in that. It just was a wonderful thing. So those were the kinds of things that I liked doing.

The other major thing that I was giving time to—deliberately, more and more—was my church. That is the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Northern Nevada. I had become a Unitarian in college, kind of moving over from the Methodist Church, and had been active when there was a group in Las Vegas that my husband and I felt that we could connect with. Then when I came to northern Nevada, I didn't connect with anything but my job for the first year.

I knew there was a Fellowship in Reno, so I connected. It was just the year that they moved into their own building, their own house that they had purchased from the path of a freeway and were using to create their home. I knew a number of people from League and public service involvement; the Unitarians are notoriously social activists. So I found many old friends there. I really enjoyed it. Any group like that, that I belonged to, I'm helping in some way. I think there were about seventy-five or eighty members when I started going in 1986. By 1988, I was the Membership Chair, organizing how to recruit and maintain more members and making the people who did come feel welcome. I enjoyed that. That's while I was working in Carson City. That was an activity that the Governor didn't have any questions about—what I did on Sunday morning.

Then I started working on program planning, because it's a lay-led group that did not have its own minister. We invited

ministers in for weekends, but never was large enough to be able to call our own minister full-time and really didn't want to. At that point in time, the group felt very proud of its ability to plan and run its own services, so I got involved in the program planning end of that, as well. [sound of papers being shuffled]

I've kept a copy of the U.U. principles. What has always attracted me to Unitarian Universalism is its open search for truth. I found that had been my journey all along, even when I was a Methodist and I was being told what to believe in a whole range of ways—that I didn't buy all of that. And so U.U. (for short) is a national denomination that came together from the Universalists and the Unitarians—oh, some thirty years ago or something like that. They both had roots in Europe and then New England, and found that they had so much in common that they became one denomination. There is a set of principles that they still don't like to call even a creed, because these people pride themselves, to some extent, in saying a Unitarian can believe anything they want. Well, that's not true, but [laughter] pretty much a wide range. I mean, it really is open and accepting. If one is truly searching for the truth and has a basis of love and respect, et cetera, then they are acceptable, and whatever they find as the truth is OK by us.

And so the programs, services, projects and activities within the Unitarian Universalist Church are quite varied and are tied more to the intellect than to the heart. We draw primarily educated people—I mean, formal education. But there are people who call themselves Christian Unitarians; there are Pagan Unitarians, and everywhere in between. There are commonalities of people within the Unitarian faith. The principles, I think, kind of state it, and we have many of our programs and activities around these



principles—everything these principles should be guiding. They're short, so I'll read them:

One is "The inherent worth and dignity of every person." Another is "Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations." Another is "Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations." (And there's a lot of friendly and sometimes not so friendly debate over the word "spiritual" and what is spiritual. And many people come to Unitarianism not wanting a lot of ritual and protocol and formality to services; they are trying to get away from that from other religions. But others come and really *want* that. Even though they have this openness in the search for truth, they still want responsive readings, hymn singing, affirmations, and things like that. So we have a variety of programming to try to meet everybody's desires.)

"A free and responsible search for truth and meaning." (This is one of the basics.) "The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large." (So each congregation is an entity within itself, makes its own decisions. It joins the national denomination and then agrees to certain things in the relationship, but the congregation is basically the key, and they make their decisions. The ministry can come from within the denomination through a process of the denomination helping us find the right kind of minister for our group, but we could also go out on our own and find our own minister. So it's very open in that regard. There are schools for ministers. They started with the Harvard Divinity School and now include Starr King School of the Ministry on the west coast, which is run by the Unitarian Universalists, I believe.)

"The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all," is another

of the principles. And the last one on the list, not necessarily in priority, is "Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part."

You do not find a god [in the U.U. principles.] You do not find Jesus Christ as a given. You do not find a belief in sin and a question about the hereafter. Those are not high priority things. I mean, there can be people within the Unitarian Church that are concerned about those issues and who, in fact, believe in a god, and in some cases believe that Jesus was divine, et cetera. But the majority are much more focused on life on earth: How can we live a good life? What is that good life? How should we be helping others? What should community be like? Respect for one another, respect for the democratic process. And so that's, in essence, what the religious denomination is all about.

I am *very* comfortable there. I have been to many, many Unitarian churches around the country. I've been to what they call the General Assembly. The year I went, it was in Calgary, Canada, (There are many Unitarian churches in Canada, as well.) which was just a *fabulous* experience.

I went on to become President [laughter] of our Reno Fellowship in that awful time that I was doing everything else, which was, I guess, 1994 to 1996. It was a two-year term. I had agreed, thinking I was not going to be teaching Women's Studies and that I would have time to do that. It all came together in a way that it just didn't make sense to resign, and so I did serve that term as the President.

It was a challenge. Again, here I am back with another kind of non-profit organization, trying to help make it work and some people feeling the less structure, the better, and some of us feeling structure is very important, so that everybody knows where they stand and how we can function effectively. I had a

wonderful group of people I worked with. We didn't always agree, but it was a good team, and I made many, many of my closest friends there at the Fellowship, and they turned out to be people that I would work with during the week on some of these other issues. Many, many of the men and women at the fellowship joined the Women's History Project. I found it a place that offered tremendous opportunity to try out ideas, to have freedom of expression, to utilize creativity—that it was very open to different styles of programming and different types of leadership, and so I truly enjoyed working with others there.

We had a annual auction where we auctioned our services to each other and our friends. We'd all come together for a dinner, and then we would buy services such as window washing, dinner party preparation, et cetera, where we would pay the church X-amount of money, and other people would do things for us. Every year I would offer one or more events in the auction. I started a series of wildflower mystery hikes, where people didn't know where we were going until the week before. Twenty-five or thirty people would buy my mystery hike, and I would take them wherever I thought the wildflowers were the best. I offered others like ice cream socials and sing-alongs here at my house where we'd just get together and get around the piano and sing all night, and different people would bring their favorite sheet music.

One time Sally Wilkins and I offered a historical scavenger hunt in downtown Reno. We had a whole group of people take us up on that, and we had them doing rubbings of the tombstones up in the cemetery up above the university and other kinds of things. So a lot of fun times—the social activity was very strong and just a lot of good friends there. It's hard to start talking about them without leaving out a whole bunch, so I don't know. [laughter]

*How to do that without naming everyone, right?*

Right. Right.<sup>6</sup>

The Governor's Conference for Women—I just had played a major role in the one that was put on in 1989 in that I was asked to be a keynote speaker for one of their programming tracks which was "Women and Work." I was very pleased to be asked to do that. I was still working for Dick Bryan then, so I got permission to be on the program. As it turned out, they started planning that in the fall. That's when he was running for the U.S. Senate. By spring I was on my way out, and so it turns out that my last day of work was the opening day of this conference. My last day of work in state government was like March 31 or something, and I was speaking at the Hilton—I really was at this conference instead. My address on "Women and Work" was then covered in a special edition of *The Public Affairs Review* of the university that recorded the speeches of all of the keynote speakers at that conference under a title "Choices and Challenges—The Next Decade." That was edited by Jill Winter at the university.

There were an incredible number of other people in workshops. It was the last statewide conference for women that's been held. There, at that point, did not appear to be a critical mass of women, north or south, that had the time and energy to keep it going, so it did not happen and has not happened since then. But I enjoyed playing that speaking role.

Leadership Carson City was something that I did right here in my home town, so to speak. There's a program throughout the country sponsored mainly by chambers of commerce that have to do with taking young people coming up in the community and having them participate in often an eight or

nine-month program. Ours was Leadership Carson put on by the Carson Chamber of Commerce. They recruited men and women, who had to pay something like a four or five-hundred dollar registration fee or get it paid by the companies that they worked for. Sponsors could also be government institutions and agencies and non-profit associations, or people could nominate themselves to come. The Chamber planned an outline for one day a month where the participants gave that entire day, and throughout that time, they learned how that community works: how it ticks; what happens with city government; what happens with the criminal justice system; what happens with tourism, et cetera. They'd go around and visit various aspects of government, hear the top people speak, kind of chew on some of the problems that the governing officials are dealing with—what role can the community be playing in solving these problems? Out of it, you hope to get better citizens that are willing to volunteer their time, or some eventually may run for office—who knows? But it's a development program that has been extremely successful throughout the country. There's a very good one in Reno, and a *very* strong one in Las Vegas.

I was in on the planning and organizing of the first Leadership Carson City and spoke at its opening session for probably the first three years; helped facilitate some visioning of what they saw were the strengths and the weaknesses of the community as it existed at that point. They later go back and compare what they learned over the nine months with what they came with at the beginning. I enjoyed working on that and making a contribution here in Carson.

*And that's a program that's still going on now, right?*

Oh, yes. Yes. And it's going on down in Carson Valley and other places, as well. So those were all [laughter] other things that I was doing in addition to the Women's History Project and finishing teaching and so on.

*I believe you wanted to do some updating on your family at this point in time?*

Right. I'm going back to looking at the mid-eighties and I don't think I've talked a lot about either of my daughters through that whole legislative process and then finding a new job, and then being in that for two years, and then going to the university.

Janet, I know that we had talked about her first marriage, which was in January, New Year's Day, 1985, to a really wonderful man named Joe Farroh. However, it was not meant to be in terms of a lengthy relationship. She was not aware that he had a cocaine habit. Through that year, she became aware. When he finally started dipping into her bank account, she just really felt that she had no choice but to file for divorce. And so they were separated and then divorced.

I don't know exactly the time, but it was somewhere in the early eighties that she became one of two or three lead dancers, one of the female leads in "Jubilee" at Bally's and enjoyed that very much. They switched off on certain numbers that they would do and had special dressing rooms and all of these things that go with being the lead dancer, which included a lot of publicity. She was on billboards in L.A. and Las Vegas, and then, ultimately, spent quite a bit of time representing the show. She was released from the show by the hotel to travel with the Las Vegas Convention Bureau to trade shows in Europe, Munich, Switzerland, Tokyo, and places like that representing Las Vegas show business. So that was really nice.

Also during this time she decided she wanted to get a college degree. So she enrolled at U.N.L.V. and, ultimately, graduated with a degree in communications. She had to do this by taking courses that fit with her work and sleep schedule, which was really difficult. Finally in the last summer, she ended up taking leave from dancing for several weeks, so she could take those intensive summer courses that go on all day, everyday, and she was able to finish it with that.

She loved the video production side of things and interned at the Henderson television station—Channel 5, I think it was. But she learned what kind of money those people made, which was *much* less than she was making as a dancer, and she was discouraged about going into that kind of business. She met some fellow students that she enjoyed *very* much and really enjoyed just being a student. We all went to her graduation—Sam and I, and Carla was able to be there.

Then there was a big graduation party for her at the home of a guy she was dating, Steven Spelman, who she ended up marrying. He was a dentist and had this big house down in southwest Las Vegas with several other guys, some of whom were in backstage management of shows on the Strip. So she was married in November of 1990 to Steve in the little church in Genoa up here, largely because her grandmother was now living in Carson City and really didn't want to travel anywhere else. The wedding dinner was at the Inn Cognito down in Genoa, and Steve's family (He has several brothers and sisters.) came from Marin County. His father's a retired policeman. His mother's a retired teacher, and they came to the wedding along with the brothers and sisters, and it was really lovely. Carla and her daughter, Sarah, who was couple of years old then, did come to the wedding as well, and that was fun.

Jan had a daughter in June of 1991, Hayley, and then a second daughter in October of 1995 (close to Nevada Day), Samantha. They have a lovely home in the west section of Las Vegas. Ultimately, Janet went back to work at Bally's in entertainment management. All the new hotels were going with their elaborate themes, and Bally's was just a hotel, so they had to come up with some way to compete. They looked for all kinds of ways to offer special events within the hotel, including business theater for conventions, and she was in charge of that—kind of exploring how they could develop some new programming and some new ways of entertaining people. She really enjoyed that a lot and worked with some very creative people there.

Those people started leaving Bally's to go with the new MGM Grand. There was a domino effect of the new MGM Grand needing a top staff to open it, and one of their top people went. Then pretty soon, the people under him went—a number of them. Eventually, Jan also left Bally's and went to work for this team of guys at the MGM Grand. She went with them about six months before their opening and was part of the team that opened the hotel and is still there—has moved more into entertainment administration and really likes the financial end. She manages the budget for her entertainment division, and she also is in charge of the decor and programming end of a number of special events they put on during the year: the New Year's Eve party for high rollers, the Super Bowl party, the Chinese New Year—it's going on right now. [February 3, 1998]

She works with a team of people. The others do the invitations and the food, but she puts together the event itself. She's gotten very much into special event decor theme and entertainment, so she knows all the choreographers and dancers, and people in

L.A. they can call on for special effects. It's a very creative, very demanding, not at all a nine-to-five job.

She really is now at a point where she'd like to get out of it and be a mother. She's really seeing the tension. Hayley, six, wants to start ballet. She really would rather be the mom who is car pooling and working with the kids at home. And so she is, this year, trying to sort out how to do that—just if there is a way she can leave this other world and maybe do some other kind of work from home. She's always liked financial management kinds of things: stock market, the world of finance. She's going to explore maybe whether she could do that as a freelance consultant or independent contractor, or something. So she's looking for ways that she can balance what she wants to get out of life.

*And she has the two daughters. Is that correct? She has Hayley and Samantha.*

Right. Two and six.

Steve, her husband's a real big baseball fan and player, who is in a league—both softball and hardball baseball leagues—that end up going to national finals and coming up here to the Lake to compete. They have a boat out at Lake Mead, and that they both enjoy skiing, although they don't get to do that too much. Anyway, they have a lot of interests, and so the big job is figuring out—I think she really does want to leave the world of entertainment and move more into a family life. That's where she's at.

Carla was married in March of 1988. I'd been here (in Carson City) two years. She went to India, and then she came back from India. Then Jan and I went with her to Massachusetts where she got settled in to what turned out to be a really traumatic experience. But then she eventually got out of that and

into the internal medicine residency, and then was looking at probably working in some kind of urgent care clinic, or something like that.

Well, in the meantime, she met a guy named Tom Oberst. Actually, she met him by answering (let me think now how this went) his ad in the *Boston Magazine*. She had dated a variety of guys back there, but not a lot, because the intensity of residency and internship was really something. But she answered his ad in the *Boston Magazine*, and he called her up and asked her for a date. They made the date at an art museum in the Boston area. Out of that date, they started having a pretty intense relationship. That fall is when I went back to visit her and see the fall colors.

He had a home he'd already built several years before. He was ten years older than she. He had gotten an engineering degree in New York and then had been on the cutting edge of the computer world and worked for an entrepreneur. They made quite a bit of money pretty quickly, so that he could afford to take two years off and go get an M.B.A. at Harvard, so he built a house at the same time in the town of Sherborn, which is a suburb of Boston.

By this time now, it's 1987. He had this house and an M.B.A. and had created his own company for awhile and now decided that he needed to have a wife and have a family. So he wrote this interesting ad in the *Boston Magazine*, and he got *lots* of letters. He and Carla, together, looked at these letters after they were married and burned them in the fireplace. She always felt it was her writing the letter on a Monet art card that made hers stand out, and he chose to ask her to have their first date in an art gallery. Well, it turns out later, he's not at all an art gallery kind of guy, but he was playing the game, you know, thinking that she was. So anyway, they've had a lot of laughs over this whole courtship end of things.



The following March, they got married, here in Genoa as well. They actually were married first, before Janet. He was from a family that appears to have been pretty dysfunctional. His father was a Vice President of AT&T, or one of those companies back East, and Tom had a very negative relationship with his father. His father mistreated his mother (in his opinion), finally, ultimately, left his mother and remarried. His mother had died not too many years after that. Anyway, Tom had just a very bad taste in his mouth about family. He had several brothers and sisters who he'd never connected with. In fact, they kind of disowned him. One sister committed suicide the fall that he and Carla were dating. He didn't bring much of a family with him, although one sister and her husband did come to the wedding.

There were people who came to the wedding from Carla's medical school background and friends in Las Vegas. The family from India that she had lived with, Dr. and Mrs. Ramancutty, were able to come to the wedding and spend some time in the states with some of their children, who lived in California. So that was a very exciting event. I was the person who organized both of these weddings, because I was the one living and working here in Carson. They were both real special events. We had lunch at the Pink House after Carla's wedding. It was a beautiful day in March with the forsythia in bloom, and we just really had a great time.

Since then, Carla and Tom have had four children: Sarah was born in September of 1988; Michael in February of 1990; Matthew in April of 1993; and Aaron in July of 1994. And they are a handful. [laughter]

She was still a medical resident when she had Sarah. Then the hospital that she finished her residency in asked her to come onto staff as the chief resident, like running the training

program for residents, and she *loved* that. She did that for a year, but it was over an hour commute from their home to Worcester, which is where the hospital was, and it just was very draining. She just felt like she had to find work closer to Sherborn. So she left that.

They had a series of *au pairs* that they got from a group bringing young women over from Europe to "live in," and that's how she was able to now do what she did outside the home. One year they had a local woman live in with them. And then, by the time they had three children, they had a bad experience with an au pair so they switched to various day care arrangements.

Well, in the meantime, Carla started working as an internist for a clinic in Milford, which was a town near Sherborn, and she set some conditions under which she would work. They hired her even though she said no night calls and no hospital rounds, and that kind of thing. So she didn't have to bring very much of the work home with her, and I think she worked three or four days a week. That lasted for two or three years, then this group of doctors got an opportunity to become staff with a local hospital, and they really needed her to do hospital work. She tried that, and it was just really very hard.

She started looking for another place to use her medical skills, and she ended up with the Harvard Community Health Plan. Her first job with them was in a clinic in Quincy, which is about a forty-minute commute from Sherborn. It's over on the coast—home of John Quincy Adams, a very historic place. That worked well for awhile, although she had her whole stable of patients, which although she still didn't have to see them in the hospital, she had to hear from them at two in the morning and handle phone calls and *lots* of extra pressure on her with this group of patients.

She was really, really having a lot of stressful times, so she started seeing a therapist to help her balance all of this out. They all agreed that she really needed to continue to be active in the medical field—that she really liked that and knew she did a good job of it, and it was good for her to have that life away from the house. Eventually, she switched to an urgent care clinic in Braintree—still working for the same group, but there she doesn't have the same patients all the time. She does emergency, urgent care work, and then when she goes home, it is over with, and she doesn't have to deal with the patients on an ongoing basis.

*Both daughters have had to find answers to balancing family and career.*

Oh, right. Absolutely.

When Carla switched to weekends, then her husband agreed to take *one* of those days. So she works either a Friday-Saturday or a Friday-Sunday every week, and the Saturday or Sunday that she works, he is in charge of all four children. They have to have all-day day care on Friday, plus then other times during the week when she needs to be able to go see her therapist and other running around she needed to do with the kids individually. So balancing all that out has been, and continues to be, a *major* problem.

Carla and the children go to a Congregational Church there, and her husband is Catholic and goes to the Catholic church. They go together and take the kids both places for certain events during the year. Her daughter was a Brownie and is now a Girl Scout, and Carla is the cookie chair for cookie sales in her town for all the scouts there and has enjoyed doing that and remembers her own scouting days very fondly.

*Tell me a little bit about what it's like for you to be a grandmother.*

Oh! It's great. I haven't been with the kids as much as I would have liked. Again, *my* problem has continued to be to balance my *own* life, you know, with all these things I get myself into.

*A generational thing, for you and both daughters.*

Yes, right. [laughter] But I've been able to be in Boston at least once a year since she's been there. When I worked for the state, there was some traveling I did that took me to the East Coast, so that was a extra bonus to be able to stop there.

In the late eighties, Carla had connected with one of her cousins, Rebecca, which brings in another aspect of the family. I guess I should go do that and then maybe tie all this together.

We've talked a lot (earlier) about Pru, my mother-in-law, who had moved to Carson shortly before I did in 1985 to be where her other son could really look after her. She lived independently in an apartment here in Carson until she died in 1994, in August of that year. She lived a full life until the day she died. She just gave out one evening. She called her son, and he came over and spent some time with her and took her to the hospital later in the evening. Her body just basically gave out the next day, and it was a really wonderful way to go—not a prolonged trauma of some kind.

None of us knew how important Pru was to Carla until Pru died, and Carla just was here on the next plane and stayed for several days and helped sort Pru's things and was with Oz and Frieda. Pru's body was cremated, and they had a little special ceremony on the top of Lone Mountain here in Carson City and

spread her ashes there. And Carla has, of *all* of the family I am sure, missed her grandmother the most. But we all really enjoyed her as long as she was here.

My brother, Byron, (I'd mentioned earlier) continues to live institutionalized in a state mental hospital in Fulton, Missouri. I have had a very minimum of contact with him. There just is no real reason. Contact is very difficult—I mean, even to make phone calls. There isn't anything to talk about. Our lives are so far apart. He has a very narrow world in which he lives. The last I heard he was not taking the lithium—the medicine that does tend to help him be more normal in his thinking and action. He has contacted me a couple of times with very irrational requests of different things, and I finally was able to talk with a social worker at the hospital who couldn't speak with me unless he would give permission that she be allowed to speak with me. All I know now is what I learned from her—that he doesn't take his medicine, and he is a difficult resident and doesn't understand why he's there. He is a sociopath, which we don't know a lot about. He just lives in another world.

*Yes. And the lithium, though, would be a medication that helps him?*

It enabled him for *years* of his life to live normally, more or less.

*But even in an institution, he refuses to take it?*

Yes, right. He's accused the hospital; he has talked to me about suing the hospital. You know, nothing goes right. He wanted me to intervene on a lot of this stuff, and so I tried to find out what the facts were. As far as I can tell, the facts are that there isn't anything I can do. And so again, I choose not to write letters

that describe a bunch of things that I'm doing, because what good does it do for him? I don't know. So we really have no contact.

*Does that continue to be a sad thing to you or have you been able to put some distance there?*

Well, it is a sad thing, but I put distance there a long time ago, so it's just a continuation of that. I don't know what the future is for him. He's four years younger than I am, so he's sixty-four, and it's pretty sad, but I don't know what else . . . you know, I can't control it.

My Aunt Lucille, who I mentioned along the way, was a favorite aunt, and I certainly was a favorite niece of hers. She was my father's sister, and she died in 1996 having lived in a graduated retirement community set up by the Congregational Church in Redlands, California. She first had her own duplex. And then when she had to, she was hospitalized there on the campus from time to time. Eventually, she broke her hip. She then had a series of other health problems and became senile. I last visited her when I went to Pasadena for some archival training in, I think, the summer of 1995. I rented a car and drove out to Redlands. She knew who I was, I think, and I spent a couple of hours with her.

In the meantime, she needed a guardian, and she had asked me to be her guardian, but the guardian really needed to be a California resident. Another cousin accepted that responsibility. And so the two of us conferred with each other as we needed to and got things she needed. She was taken care of in that institution until she died in 1996.

Earlier when she was in charge of her own affairs, she said she was leaving some money to me—I mean, leaving things to me, eventually. But I assumed that all the money had gone in taking care of her, because two or three years had gone by. Well, the man who

was her guardian (who was the executor of the estate) then contacted me soon after her death and said that there was an inheritance that was being split between his wife, who was my cousin, and me. I received about \$40,000 from her, which was a really neat gift that I'd never expected. It turns out that she had had investments that had continued to earn money, and that her retirement from the California State Teachers Association had *really* covered her living expenses. That was an extremely good package, and along with the investments and other things, there was still an inheritance left after she died. So I shared that money with my daughters and bought a new car—paid cash, which was kind of nice.

*And the car you had before was kind of on its last . . . ?*

Well, it was ten years old.

*It had been all around Nevada?*

Yes, it had. But anyway, she was a really neat piece of my life along the way. I didn't have a lot of family connections, but she was one that I remember with a lot of joy. And she always loved me and my life and loved to connect with what I was doing.

*It strikes me that you lost two really important people—your mother-in-law and your aunt—within a two-year period there.*

Yes, right. That's true. That's true. Oh, my Aunt Lucille had been able to come to Carla's wedding. That was back in March of 1988, and that was really a fun thing for her to be here and connect with the family.

My ex-husband, I don't know where we left him. [laughter] He had moved from Boulder City to Molokai in the mid-eighties,

somewhere in there, and then shortly after that is when Pru moved up here. And he had remarried, to the woman that had been the wife of his best friend, and her name is Nancy. They had lived in Boulder City, and when they moved to Hawaii, they had a condo that had been built by Sheraton Corporation, which they have continued to live in and is near the town of Kaunakakai.

He basically retired. He's done some volunteer work in the schools with reading programs with kids, and he had planned to do some kind of semi-volunteer medical work until he found out about the malpractice insurance [laughter] he would have to have to do anything. So he just gave up on that. He returned for both of the girls' weddings, and that was a really good thing.

And then Oscar and Frieda, who have lived here in town, they have had three children of their own who kind of stair-stepped in between our two.

Carla and Rebecca had connected in a very close way back in Boston when Rebecca was back there in training with a Big Eight C.P.A. firm. She ultimately came back to San Francisco, formed her own C.P.A. firm eventually in Stockton, and then she and her brother and sister started getting married. Rebecca is the oldest. Let's see. Rebecca married a man named Tom Rey, and they got married down around Thousand Oaks, California. Carla was able to come back to that wedding and bring Sarah, and so that would have been somewhere in about 1990, I guess. Actually, the wedding was 1989. They have two daughters, Krista and Lisa. Then Vanessa had married a man named Larry Ryan, and they have three children, Andy, Scott, and Madeleine. The youngest of the three is Dana, a boy, who had married a woman named Cheryl, and they have three boys, Hayden, Evan, and Spencer.

Through Carla and Rebecca, they decided we needed to start having family reunions between all of these cousins. There were at least two family reunions in the late eighties or early nineties instigated by Rebecca and Carla. Well, there were three, actually; two were here because Pru was here, and everybody just loved coming to Carson and to both of our houses. They didn't have that many kids yet.

Sam was able to come to those reunions, as well. He was the secretary of the homeowners association of his condos, and part of their agreement is that they would have at least one of their meetings every year in California, because there were a lot of California owners of the condos there. So he could come back on business and add a family reunion at the same time. So all that was great, and we were all able to really, you know, keep some good connections.

The last family reunion we had was at the home of Jan and Steve in Las Vegas. They have a *huge* swimming pool in their backyard with palm trees and a very Las Vegas-style house. The families stayed at the Excalibur Hotel on the Strip. Like Carla, they had just two children when that reunion took place. But there would have been what, about six kids altogether, I guess, among all the families. So it was a big swim party—a big water party. The families just *loved* the Excalibur, which is really geared for kids, too. They stayed in the castle, everybody just had a wonderful experience in that hotel. So that was the last family reunion we've had.

*Those family connections, all of these that you're talking about, have been really important to you. Is that right?*

Right. It's enabled us to connect in ways that we never did when we were living in different parts of the world. It's been really good for Carla, particularly. She has *needed*

that. She's the furthest away, and it's the hardest to get back. She would much rather be living in Nevada than on the East Coast, and so that's really been of great help to her to connect with her cousins and her sister.

That brought in Oscar and Frieda, who have eight grandchildren among their three children. So altogether, with the two families, we now have fourteen grandchildren. And I remain pretty closely connected with Oz and Frieda, and they call me when their kids and grandkids come to town. We'll be getting together when Carla comes in the next couple of weeks with three of hers.

The other family that I should mention is an aunt that's still living in Otterbein, Ohio, who was the sister-in-law of my mother. My mother's brother was a man named Paul Flook, who was a teacher. His wife was Louella, and they moved several years ago to a retirement community. First had their own home, and then moved into an apartment and then moved into a care facility. Uncle Paul died about two years ago, and so my Aunt Louella still lives in Otterbein, Ohio. We just kind of communicate at Christmas time. So that kind of brings us up-to-date with family, I believe, up to the point of my illness.

You asked how I enjoyed being a grandmother. And actually, I have *never* been a journal writer, which kind of seems strange in a way [laughter] with all the things I've done.

But I did start a reflections notebook when I went back to visit Carla to see my first grandchild, and I wrote in this on the plane going and then continued in this off and on for a couple of years. Then I'm sorry to say have not done much with it. But I went through and looked at it, and I marked a part that I might read. This was written in March 20, 1990 on the airline en route to Reno from Boston, and I said:



“Another wonderful visit, this time with the added pleasure of getting to know Michael Karl, my new grandson born February 9. He’s taking longer to settle into sleeping through the night, needing to be fed every three to four hours. He was so wonderful to hold and cuddle. I spent a couple of nights downstairs on the couch taking care of him, so Carla and Tom could get some sleep. I couldn’t believe Sarah, a little lady with strawberry blonde hair that has a wonderful curl in the back of the neck, walking all over the house, maneuvering the stairs, going down the slide in her room, taking very complicated things apart and putting them back together again, taking care of her dolly just the way we take care of Michael, mimicking everything we do. I am sure she’s going to be a mechanical engineer. She says lots of words and is an extremely happy child. Messy mealtime and trying to wean off the bottle are mommy and daddy’s biggest challenges at the moment. Elke went to New York . . .” (this was an *au pair*) “for a vacation, so I did lots of baby and child care so Carla could get rest and do some things with Tom. She’s a wonderful mother but quite worried about getting it all done when she returns to work on March 26. Thank heavens it’s only three more months until her chief residency at Worcester Memorial Hospital ends and she starts a three-day a week clinic job closer to home. During this week, I’ve been reminded of how it was to have Carla and Janet at these ages—just the same, seventeen months apart. It was definitely a full-time job, and I can’t conceive of how I could have held another full-time job outside the home at the same time.

“In between baby care, Carla and I sorted her clothes, discarded a lot of them, went shopping for some new things to mix and match. It was great to see her interested in fixing herself up again.

“A special morning was spent in our taking Sarah to her first Gymboree class—a health exercise club for infants three months up through elementary age. She loved the climbing apparatus, the slide, the mother-baby games and songs and playing with others her age. Carla is going to enroll her in a weekly class. Elke will take care of Michael. Another fun afternoon was going to Dover to the children’s park and meeting Carla’s friend, Judy, and son, Ben, who is one month older than Sarah. For me, it was a very rewarding week to enjoy both children so much and help Carla over some hard times. I wish we lived closer together.”

Even though Jan’s closer, the times I’ve been down there have been on work, and I’ve stayed with her a lot, but I haven’t been around them as much as I would have liked, you know. That’s the way it went.

*We wanted to talk today about your illness. Maybe we could start with the “who, what, when”—what the illness is and when you learned of it.*

OK. Well, you know, health-wise, I’ve really been fortunate. I mean, as we talked about a *lifetime* [laughter], there’s been a minimum of illness involved. I don’t know if we talked about a gallbladder operation, or not. Let me see. As I recall, we did talk about the very positive experience I had when I was at the university—with Rutgers University in New Jersey—and going back there summers and working with the special Center for the American Woman and Politics. Well, one of those summers—the last summer that I did that—I was with the bus load of college students in Washington, D.C. for the day, and I became *very* ill and just could not figure out what was wrong. I had a very miserable bus ride back to New Brunswick, New Jersey, at which time I said, “Take me to the hospital. Something’s wrong.” I spent two days there being diagnosed with a gallbladder attack

and the need for surgery. They were able to deal with the attack and clearly diagnose the problem, but felt that I could get home. So I came home and did have the surgery a week later here in Reno. It was the laparoscopic technique, which is incredibly wonderful. [laughter] What used to be a miserable seven or eight weeks of being an invalid recuperating from gallbladder surgery now was a one-week experience with a minimum of pain. So that’s the first time I’d been ill, ever. My other experiences in hospitals were having the two girls. [laughter]

In the fall of 1996, I was having some difficulties with gastroenterology kinds of things and pain in my abdomen. Finally I had some tests, which diagnosed me in January of 1997 with diverticulosis. I was trying to figure out how to balance diet and fiber, and I continued to have some pain and thought that it was from that, but finally got to a point where I felt something strange in my abdomen as well. I went back to the doctor early September of 1997. My family physician, Dr. Judy Hilbish, said that I had a

hernia—an umbilical hernia—and referred me to a surgeon, Charles Carpenter, and I was scheduled for surgery. When I met with him before the surgery, he asked me additional questions, and I told him about the continuing abdominal pain and trying to work out the management of the diverticulosis. He said that he would like to do a CAT Scan prior to the surgery. So we scheduled that for the following day, and that CAT Scan showed a tumor in the pancreas.

They proceeded to do the umbilical hernia surgery but found a metastasized cancer right under the skin in that same area, which they, then, took a biopsy of. That gave them the diagnosis of cancer compatible with pancreatic cancer. They could have done a needle biopsy to confirm the pancreatic cancer, but they decided they didn't have to, because we got the biopsy of the cancer that was there around the navel. Well, I received this information in a telephone call from Dr. Hilbish on a Thursday afternoon, and I was scheduled for the umbilical hernia surgery in an out-patient clinic in Reno the following morning at eleven. I was at work at the History Project, and actually, we had a board meeting that night. So that was kind of the beginning of a new chapter in my life.

She just said, you know, "I don't have good news. The CAT Scan does show a pancreatic tumor, and this is not the kind of thing for which surgery is an option. The surgeon has said he will do a biopsy. We're going to proceed with your surgery tomorrow, and he'll do a biopsy. I'm recommending that you see a Dr. Shields and Schiff, who are oncologists." Actually, she had already scheduled a meeting with them the following Monday or Tuesday. The umbilical hernia surgery was going to be just a short amount of time in this out-patient clinic the following day.

*That was the first information.*

Right. I had been in touch with my daughter, Carla. I didn't call her really until we scheduled the umbilical hernia, and so that had only been like two days before. Well, she wanted to talk with the surgeon, and she knew I was going to have the CAT Scan. Then they called *her* with the results of the CAT Scan, so she learned that from the doctor. We got into a series of phone calls that night, which included my other daughter, Janet. And Carla, basically by midnight, was on an airplane and arrived soon after I was back in recovery the next day about 1:30 p.m.

*What was your emotional reaction to this when you heard this news?*

Well, just kind of deadening, you know, "Wonder what this means?"

*Going numb?*

Yes, just kind of this, "I have a major health problem. I have a *terminal* health problem."

*Because that was clear right away?*

That's what they said.

*That was what she was saying to you.*

Yes, yes, yes. Now, not until the biopsy and I met with the oncologist and all that did that become more formal. But the story was: there is no good news with pancreatic cancer at the place that it was located, which is at the base of the pancreas.

Now I have a *very* good friend, Sandra Neese, who in the last six weeks has also been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, but her's

was up at the opposite end of the pancreas and involving the gallbladder and the liver. And there *was* a surgical procedure which they did on New Year's Eve for her, and she is coming through that beautifully, even though there's a lymph node they couldn't reach. So she's now undergoing some chemotherapy and radiation. The other part of the cancer, hopefully, is gone, and she will be able to live a long, productive life.

*Yes. I can't even imagine trying to absorb that kind of information.*

Yes. Well, I didn't. [laughter] You know, you just kind of . . . I mean, I wasn't in denial. Just you can't take it all in at once.

Anyway, so then Carla was talking with Jan, and there was a whole round robin of stuff that went on. The next day Jan arrived in early morning and was with me at the out-patient clinic and, during the whole process of the surgery, in the waiting room. And then the doctor, she was the first one to whom the surgeon said, "You know, we're sending this out for a biopsy for analysis by the pathologist, but it's obvious that the cancer has metastasized and is there right under the skin." So he confirmed that there was a cancer, a malignancy there.

Carla arrived. It was not very traumatic—the procedure I went through—and by 5:00 o'clock we were home here in Carson. And so we spent, basically, the next three days together, and we had a wonderful time. I mean, wonderful in that we were all together.

Carla, of course, with her medical training, knew the most. I mean, Carla knew all the bad things that can come with all this. We had yet to meet with an oncologist. Carla's an internist, so she's not an expert, by any means, in this area. But she had to carry the burden of knowing, but yet not knowing—and nobody

knows. That's the thing that you learn right away—is that there aren't any formulas. There isn't any easy answer. Every case is so different.

And so we spent the weekend just kind of enjoying each other. We went over to Oz and Frieda's for dinner. Well, actually, probably half of it we spent on the telephone, because everybody started hearing the news. I think Sally Wilkins was the first member of the History Project that knew, because she came into the office, probably within a half-hour of Dr. Hilbish calling and telling me, and I was there getting ready for the board meeting that night. So I told Sally, then she started telling others. And so then by the time I was home from the surgery, there was a whole series of people calling, and then people that we felt we ought to call. The whole weekend was spent talking with people and not really knowing what was going on yet.

*Yes, because you hadn't seen the oncologist, at this point?*

Or gotten the results of the biopsy. Right.

Carla was able to stay until Tuesday afternoon. Jan revised her schedule so she could stay until Wednesday. So both the girls were here quite a bit that week, and we really just started talking about the fact that we didn't know how long I was going to live. I mean, we were moving into the last stages of my life. Carla said, "Well, let's get your calendar out," and we started looking at what would be our plan. So we got out the calendar, and I started telling them things that I was feeling . . .

Oh, well, I wasn't feeling good. I came home, and the pain medicine they gave me was making me sick. I was really, really nauseated and *oh*, miserable. And so Carla just took me off of that right away and called the doctor and said, "This isn't working." I

quit taking that medicine, and within four hours I was up moving around like nothing had happened. Once we got me on the right medication, I recovered very quickly from that surgery.

*Wonderful to have a daughter who's a doctor in that situation, huh?*

[laughter] Yes, that's right. And she started calling her friends from medical school all around the country, and they started telling her oncologists to talk to. And so *oh*, the telephone was going.

Oh, and one of the things that they started doing was taking charge of my life, you know. [laughter] It was fun. Certain things, like I had never had a cordless phone, and here we were running all over the house to this one phone, so they went *right* out and bought a cordless phone so I could talk to people lying down. Then they decided I needed a cell phone in my purse, so if I ever felt like I needed to stop the car and needed help, why I'd have a phone to call somebody. So they got me a cell phone. We just started doing all these things that, you know, make my life here more manageable.

And then we started looking at the calendar, and I just said, "Well, as long as I feel good, I want to do these things. I've got to go on this drama tour out into rural Nevada because I wrote the script. I don't yet have it all pulled together, and we're booked. And we're going to do it in Virginia City, and so we've got to do that. And then I've got to teach this class in November that I'm already scheduled for. And I've got to get my hair done every Tuesday morning." That has just been really a big important part of my life, somebody else doing my hair.

So Carla put boxes around all these appointments through Christmas that were in my calendar. Then that left a bunch of things

that didn't look so important anymore, and so those kind of got crossed off, and we started building in other things that were important, like going back to Boston to visit Carla's kids. Within a week, we had figured out what the best week was, and I had my plane tickets to go to Boston. And that Jan would come up Thanksgiving. So we all just started mapping our lives so that we were going to have a lot of time together.

Well, we did that. We had a *wonderful* time right then. That first block of time where they were both here for four days. And then we put Carla on the plane, and then I put Jan on the plane. That was really a great beginning of a new chapter in my life.

*You really needed them then, too.*

Oh, yes. Right. That Sunday night we had a *really* big talk together, the three of us, and I said I wasn't afraid. I mean, I really wasn't. The main thing that I didn't want was to be in a lot of pain, because I just don't take that very well and haven't experienced it a lot and, *oh*, I had been in quite a bit of pain, I realized then, for several months and probably had had this cancer when I just felt it was the diverticulosis that I was trying to manage and wasn't doing a very good job of.

Carla said, "There is no need for you to be in pain. There just is no need for that, and I can assure you, you don't have to be in pain." Then the oncologist and everybody else has confirmed that all along the way.

So, I guess what happened that weekend is, it certainly started putting new meaning in my life—you know, what is really important. Part of that related to family, which is, of course, Carla and Jan and their families. That's really the family that I have.

Work—what did I want to continue trying to do? What was important that I do?



My situation was now that I am drawing retirement, and I had just started that week, as a matter of fact, being a part-time paid state Director of the History Project. And then friends. So family, work, and friends. And you kind of look at all the pieces of that, and then what does each of that mean? An even bigger challenge of balancing priorities.

Well, the pain management plan went into effect that weekend. When we met with the oncologist, he then reconfirmed a no-surgery option. Radiation really not recommended—the difficulty being in focusing on what you want and not hitting things you don't want. Carla had learned about a chemo program called GEMZAR. Several of her oncology referrals around the country started calling back, and they all independently mentioned that as a positive program that was going on, where twenty-five to thirty percent of the cases had experienced a reduction in the size of the tumor. Nobody said it was a cure, but that it was worth doing, but with some side effects as all chemo has.

Several people in town started calling, talking with us about oncologists. Jill Winter called, whose husband has bone marrow cancer, and she *highly* recommended Shields and Schiff and had a very positive experience with them. Someone else that had them also had a very positive experience. So we were real curious about what they were going to be like in real life. Carla, of course, was very super-critical of who her mother's doctor was going to be and wanted it to be somebody that didn't mind a doctor/daughter wanting to be involved.

We met with Dr. Shields, and he was fabulous. I mean, he met all of our tests. He mentioned the GEMZAR independently, which made Carla feel good, and it looked like that he and his partner were up on the latest options of treatment.

Some people were already calling us about alternative medicine. And people were bringing me books and tapes, and just, you know, everybody just started an outpouring of cards, letters, gifts, and support systems and everything. I asked Dr. Shields about alternative medicine kinds of treatments, and he said that for he and his partner, that was not a part of *their* treatment—their practice—because they didn't have clinical studies that showed that any of these things really worked. That's the kind of western medicine that they practiced. They had no objection to *my* exploring anything that I felt comfortable with, but they felt there were things out there that were not too advisable. Whatever I wanted to do was up to me.

So after that weekend, *immediately*, Sally Wilkins, Eileen Cohen—I don't know how all this came together. There were a *ton* of people talking with each other about me and my need for support, and out of that emerged a support system that just wouldn't quit. [laughter] Eileen lives down here. And a whole bunch of my friends and students and others in the Carson-Carson Valley area actually had a meeting and organized: who was going to cook; who was going to clean; who was going to drive—and just had more support ready than I even *needed*. Sally was doing the same thing with people in Reno.

Out of that, they started immediately talking about some kind of party—some celebration that we ought to have. Within a week, you were calling me saying we all have permission to go forward with an oral history. (Or somebody—I don't know if you were the first person, but I think Sally warned me that this was going on.) And the plans for an oral history were in place. There was just all this incredible stuff that started happening and has continued to this day.

*Have you been surprised by it?*

Very surprised, just overwhelmed. I just could not believe it. A lot of it, yes. I mean, there were people that I've known and associated with, but then just to have people from twenty and thirty years ago hear and then respond in some way.

Well, then they did a news release in Las Vegas. A news reporter that I know down there called and had heard about it, so she interviewed me, and that ran early in October. That let another whole piece of Nevada know. And, *oh*, the phone calls and mail just kept coming and coming, and people that I just hadn't seen or heard anything from for years.

Much of it was really a testimonial to what they felt they had gained from being with me—our friendship or whatever work project had brought us together. It just became overwhelming, because I had cut out a lot of these things to try to open up my life to the things that were important—that I thought were important—and what the rest of the world felt was important [laughter] was also having to be dealt with. People were planning parties and planning events, and I finally just had to say, "Wait a minute! Let's coordinate this a little bit." So it just was getting to be too much.

*Because after you and your daughters had sat down with your calendar and had things pretty well under control, it just quickly spun out of control with all this outpouring of caring.*

That's right. That's right. Like the oral history alone . . . what? This is our thirteenth session and they've each been about two and a half hours. Yes.

*And forty-second or third tape. Yes, and it's taken a big chunk of your time.*

And the time that I've spent, I've loved doing this. This news was carried in the newspaper articles in Las Vegas, and then that was picked up by the AP, and then that was picked up by *USA Today*, so that two friends read about me while having coffee—one in Spain, and one in Italy. [laughter] Literally, the whole world knew.

From the very beginning, the first week that I was up and out and everything, I was saying to people that I was really grateful that I had this block of time, that I knew I was coming toward the end of my life, that I could plan closure to things that were important to me, and I still feel that way.

Now when we met with the oncologist . . . I think that Sunday night that the girls and I were here together is the first time that I brought up, "Well, what kind of time do you think I have?" And nobody knows. Later I had a doctor in Las Vegas that I spoke with who's a physician, but she's in remission on a cancer of the liver. I've talked with her a couple of times, and she said, "No doctor should ever tell a cancer patient what kind of time they have, because they don't know. It's just . . . you can't."

But we did discuss this with Dr. Shields, and basically he said at least probably six months, but how much beyond that, he didn't know. So you kind of look at that as a benchmark of some kind. Well, gosh . . . six months. Then Carla told me afterwards that in her mind she was thinking two to six months. So that had to have been a really tough time for her. You know, two months isn't very long.

*Not very long. And this is now five months ago?*

Five. Yes, right. Right. Yes. So I was reacting to that saying, "Well, you know, if I've got at least six months, then I want to get some things done."

You start thinking at my age about how are you going to die. You think about that now and then. I had thought, “Well, if I were in a car accident or something, what would the girls do with all my stuff?” [laughter] It would be just a really major *problem*. And so here I now had an opportunity to decide what I would do with all my stuff.

*Because you’ve kept records and documents and files. I mean, even just the Women’s History Project, we know, is a lot.*

Right. So that week I started listing those categories of stuff [laughter] and looking at what I might need to do to bring closure to that—who I might give it to.

One of the things I decided I wanted to do was get all my Kodachrome slides organized and ready to go where they might be used. I just started working on the projects that I thought were important and ignoring a lot of other things.

The girls started making time that they could come back. They’ve both been here about twice a month, really, since then, so we’ve been able to do things together, and they’ve been able to schedule that. Well, Carla flew back and went with us on the tour into rural Nevada and drove my car and was a stagehand, and we just had a wonderful time. That was such a good time.

*And this tour was to do what?*

This was a drama that I wrote. It was “The Saga of Sara Bard Field and her Nevada Suffrage Connection.” And it’s probably about the fifth drama I’ve written about the history of suffrage in Nevada. We had . . . three performers on the road: Roz Works, who plays Anne Martin; and Bonda Lewis, who plays Sara Bard Field; and myself as

the narrator. Kathy Noneman joined us in Virginia City as Bird Wilson. And then we added other characters, who didn’t have to say anything but who were the drivers of the car, and others. Then a local woman in each town, who played the head of the Equal Franchise Society, and I wrote a script for her to welcome the crowd.

The script that we used was a mixture of the two performers interacting with each other and reminiscing about events that really happened in Nevada in 1916, when Sara Bard Field took a transcontinental auto trek all across the country in a 1915 Overland. We had a wonderful stage prop built by Larry Tanner of the Nevada State Museum—a 1915 Overland car that was in three parts and had to be put together and taken apart in every town with a Phillips screwdriver and then put into a box on top of my car. So there was a lot involved.

We were in historic dress, and we did seven performances in five days, starting at the opera house in Virginia City on October 18 and ending in Ely on October 22, and then driving back home the next day. So we had, oh, just a *fabulous* time. We performed for over a thousand people, about five hundred of those being school children in Eureka and Ely and Austin.

*It’s interesting, because people always say, “Well, if I had . . .,” you know, very logically, not emotionally, “... if I had only six months to live, I would travel around the world, or I would . . .,” whatever. But you’re really talking about that process of what became important.*

Yes. Well, and I began to realize several things that first weekend. One is that I had no far-flung country that I was dying to get to. I mean, I could have done that. I can still do it if I want to, but that’s not a part of me. I’ve

never had the urge to get to all these places in Europe and the Far East that people love to go to. That's just not a part of me. I want to just be in Nevada. I could think of places in *Nevada* I haven't been that I'd just as soon get to, but there was no exotic trip out there that meant something.

*More time with your daughters.*

More time with my two daughters, bringing closure to projects at the Women's History Project and others. I began to realize what all those things were, which is mind-boggling. And then we started adding *new* projects like the oral history.

And then friends, and realizing that I *really* wanted quality time with a *lot* of people that I had not had quality time with for a long time— realizing that that's a part of my life that I haven't cultivated as much. All those quality people [laughter] started getting in touch with me, and *everybody* wanted to have lunch, and everybody wanted to go to dinner, and everybody wanted me to come to Las Vegas.

I decided I would accept no new speaking engagements, but that I would meet all of those that I already had on the calendar, which included one in Las Vegas on Nevada Day for the Mesquite Club. I really had mixed feelings about that, because Nevada Day is a really special day here, and I hadn't missed one in ten years. So now I was going to be in Las Vegas instead, but I was talking about Nevada women's history before the oldest women's club in Las Vegas. And that, actually, turned out to be a wonderful day. They made me an honorary member of the Nevada Federation of Women's Clubs that day, and I saw people I hadn't seen in many years that had been good friends in Las Vegas. So it was a real plus to be down there.

So anyway, the crush of people—their love, their reactions, their plans for support, their wanting to celebrate my life—became just really overwhelming. It was really hard to deal with at first.

The event the night of October 25 was just an extraordinary event called "Wildflowers and Sage" and organized by Sally Wilkins and Joan Kerschner with a lot of other people playing major roles—Jim McCormick, who did an incredible drawing of me that went on the invitation. And we now have a video of that whole evening of almost two hours of poetry and singing and speeches and all kinds of things, at which you presented the funny segment of my oral history of how we decided to move to Las Vegas, which was fun.

I tried one chemo. I tried starting that chemo program in early October. The first two days I felt great, and the third day I just had to go to bed. I was just devoid of energy, and that really bothered me, in that I didn't see how I could schedule it once a week for the next seven weeks and get any of these other things done that I really had on this calendar. So I went back to the doctor and said that, and he said, "If you have enough energy, and you feel well enough to *do* these things that you want to get done in the next seven weeks, why should we make you feel worse right now? So come back in December." So we just dropped the chemo option, at that point.

I did proceed, and I did get all those things done that I wanted to do in October and November. I taught the class in November on "Women's History and Feminist Thought." It was a great group. I did the speeches that I was scheduled to do and a range of other things, including the "Saga" tour in rural Nevada.

Something else that the girls and I started talking about that first weekend was the fact that I had a will, and when we went to look at it, it was just absolutely funny. I mean, I hadn't

updated it for awhile and it obviously needed some work done.

Some people suggested we might look into the idea of a trust. Oh, about this time I also asked a woman that I knew was a financial planner here in town, Gloria MacDonald, to do an analysis of all of my assets, or what assets I had, and which ones could be liquidated in what manner, like if I needed money. Fortunately, I am on the state's insurance program, and that is an excellent program, so the majority of my expenses are being covered. I have some savings and investments, so I did not see an immediate need for money, and a plan that we could make was going to cover that.

But I didn't know, if I needed to access money, how to do that the smartest way. She did develop a financial plan for me that gave us all that information, and she did recommend that we look into a trust. Since then I have had a trust drawn up. Pauline Bevill did it with lots of special attention, which I really appreciated, but all of that takes time. And then getting all of the assets that I have into the trust is a case-by-case—each one has to be deliberately placed in the trust, so that continues to take some time but went up pretty high on the priority list.

What happened on December 4, the day that I was scheduled to meet with Dr. Shields and talk about resuming the GEMZAR program? Actually, earlier that day, I called him from home in the middle of the night and was just really ill with nausea and pain in my abdomen. He agreed that I should come into the emergency room at Washoe Medical Center. I called Oz and Frieda who quickly picked me up and drove to Reno. For at least ten days, I had been *not* feeling well and really dealing with a constant constipation problem up to this point.

By noon that day we knew I had a blockage of the bowel, and I was scheduled for surgery

that evening. I had a colostomy at that time. I thought *very* possible I would not recover from that surgery. I just was in such pain and just knew something major was going on and just really felt that maybe that was the end. I had called Carla from the emergency room and told her what we thought was happening. Again, she was on the next plane and really didn't know for sure until she got here what *had* happened. By that time, I was back in my hospital room from the surgery. Then I had also called Jan before the surgery, and she ended up coming up the following Sunday. So I was at Washoe Medical Center for five days. I was released the following Monday, and Carla went back home on Tuesday. Jan came up on Sunday and stayed through Monday. So that whole experience was just miraculous.

Thank heavens for technology. [laughter] The doctor that came to me first was Dr. Stumpf, who was in the same surgical team as Dr. Carpenter, who had done the umbilical hernia. They had been called in by the oncologist, and it was Stumpf who met with me. He came to my bed in the afternoon and told me that the test they had done earlier in the day confirmed the blockage. He told me that I didn't have a lot of options: one, that we could do nothing, and I was pretty much assured of a quick and painful death; or two, they could do the colostomy—a major surgical procedure where they would take out pieces of the bowel and try to tie it all back together again. He just basically asked permission to proceed with the surgery and for them to do what they felt was best when they got inside, so I gave that permission.

They scheduled me for seven o'clock that night, and I was in incredible pain. There was a wave of pain that would come over me like you were in labor, but *much* worse than any labor, and I just didn't know how I was going to be able to stand it. This was about three



in the afternoon. When Dr. Carpenter came in, and we knew I was headed for surgery, I thought, “How am I going to last until surgery?”

Quickly, the nurses (I was in the oncology ward, and the staff there is absolutely fabulous) started right away doing the procedures to get me ready for surgery which, basically, knocked me out. They started by putting a tube down my throat. I had been having nausea and vomiting during the day, so the tube started dealing with that. Basically, I was “out of it” until about 10:30 that night.

When I awoke, several people were there. Let me think how all this went. I can’t remember now. In the meantime, Jim McCormick and Loretta met Carla at the plane. She called them from the airplane. Oz and Frieda, I had called them in the middle of the night the night before to take me into the hospital, and they were here at the house within twenty minutes. And *they* also met Carla at the airport, because I called them that she was coming in. So she had this delegation of people who met her and brought her immediately to the hospital. They were all there for a few minutes, and I was kind of groggy, at that point. Carla spent that night in the hospital room, and there was a whole telephone tree going among people and letting everybody know what was happening.

The next day I was up walking. Everybody says I had an absolutely fantastic recovery. The colostomy—the intestinal system started kicking in within twenty-four hours. They said they had a special nurse that was going to come and help me with the apparatus that I needed to learn how to deal with the colostomy, and that turned out to be Gloria Castillo, a member of the History Project and a Basque woman from Sparks. She’s a retired ostomy nurse from the V.A. hospital, and she came and gave me my first lesson on

how to change the wafer and the bag that my waste goes into. And she came back, then, the morning that I was released.

Anyway, that part I really accepted very quickly. I just was grateful the technology existed. They told me that some people, some patients can’t even look at it for six or seven days.

*I was going to say some people feel like that’s very traumatic.*

Oh, it is. For some reason, I was happy to be alive. [laughter] If that was part of it, then fine with me. And the whole system started kicking in properly very quickly. I had been in agony for a week, at least, just really more and more concerned that something was wrong and probably should have gone to the doctor sooner. But anyway, things went well, and I was released on Monday.

There was a major event scheduled in my honor on December 15 at the Hilton as a part of the Governor’s Conference on Tourism. That had been on the calendar for several months. Tom Tait, the Director of the Commission on Tourism, is a good personal friend of mine. In fact, he was a housemate of mine here in the late eighties, when he was working for Governor Miller in another capacity—or actually working for Governor Bryan then. He came down to Carson City that first weekend that I was home in September with the diagnosis of terminal cancer and visited, and then that day he said, “We have the Governor’s Conference on Tourism coming up in December, and I’ve already spoken with the Governor and others, and we’re going to give you a special tribute that day.”

Well, I thought that it would be something around tourism, which I saw as appropriate. I had been very involved in the beginning of

tourism as it exists today here in the state. Well, that got bigger and bigger, [laughter] and when it finally happened, it involved the Board of Regents presenting me with the Distinguished Nevadan Award; the Governor presenting me with the Lifetime Achievement Award; the leaders in the Legislature presenting me with a special commendation for my legislative history; the Director of the Las Vegas, Clark County Library Board coming up and announcing a special collection to be created in the Las Vegas libraries in my name; Sue Wagner speaking; and a whole range of other people including both U.S. Senators—Senator Bryan and Senator Reid. So that became a major event. Well, I knew it was going to be big, so I really hoped I would make it. [laughter] And it began to look very clearly like I could.

They had asked me earlier to give them the names of people that might wish to be there that they would invite as their guests. I had done that, and there were over a hundred people there from Las Vegas and Reno and friends from Oregon. My tour partner, Maxine, came down from Port Townsend, Washington, and it was an absolutely fabulous day. I really felt pretty good. [laughter] And everybody said I looked amazingly good for having had major surgery just ten days earlier.

One of the most gratifying things about the attention given me since September is the number of honors or gifts that include some type of legacy that will live on after my death. I would like to mention these legacies from the beginning. Well, I've mentioned the big event on October 25th. I wish I had time to describe blow-by-blow what all went on there, but probably two of the highlights were Wally Cuchine playing me in a *very* funny monologue—with a silver wig and one of my old tour company blazers—in a monologue that involved about six telephones

ringing, one-by-one, and him portraying me using them to gain support for projects down through the years. It was just really very funny and had everybody, including me, rolling in the aisles.

Then the ending was, of all people, Clay Jenkinson as Thomas Jefferson speaking to Jean Ford. [laughter] And that was just *really* beautiful the way he was able to tie Jefferson's life and mine and an interest in the citizens and their participation in government. I'm so glad that we have a video to preserve that evening, which then moved to the state library building for food and drink and contra dancing. I really felt good enough to do the contra dancing, which I love doing.

There were probably, overall in the two buildings, 350 people there. I had known some of them *all* my life in Nevada, and some of them only a short time. I read the names of people on the guest book that signed in the legislative building, and some of them I didn't even know at all, so I don't know where they came from.

That and then the event on December 15 were the *largest* of a whole *series* of tributes and various kinds of various ways that people and public institutions have let it be known to *me* that they appreciated my being in Nevada and the things that I've done during my years here. I sat down, and I've tried to keep some kind of list. I have not at *all* been able to keep up with thank-you notes to people individually, but I am attempting to do that as much as I can.

The news media have been very generous with their time and space. Through articles by Lenita Powers here in Reno, and Jane Morrison in Las Vegas, and columns by Rollan Melton and Mike O'Callaghan, the media has let it be known what's going on in my life now and thanking me for contributions I've made in the past. That has generated another

whole world of people who wanted to give me support.

Early in October I had been scheduled to speak to the UNR Political Action Club that I helped create and was the faculty advisor to in the early nineties. I had been scheduled to speak to them on Nevada women's history. Dr. Jenny Ring of Women's Studies called me about a week ahead and said, "We'd like to turn this meeting into an event where, after you speak, we would like to honor you with some remarks from people who worked with you on campus." So it ended up with President Joe Crowley presenting me with the President's Medal for the University of Nevada, Reno, and then testimonials being given by Dr. Anne Howard, Ann Ronald and former students of mine, like Sheryl Kleinendorst and Sylvia Ontaneda-Bernales. Judy Winzeler of the Nevada Humanities Committee spoke, and also Helen Jones, who had been my colleague in charge of the Women's Center when I was in charge of Women's Studies. There were students and friends and other faculty there—Catherine Smith and Sandra Neese—and that was a lovely evening. Very hard for me to talk to that group, however . . . just very emotional, particularly when I looked up and saw people like Bev Hubbard that had been in my classes. I mean, that was the hardest to deal with but, overall, really very, very nice.

The Nevada Women's Fund has a gala every October, which is their major fall fundraiser for the scholarships that they give. Fritsi Ericson, their Executive Director, called to say they had determined to make me one of their Women of Achievement, and so they added that as an element of the program. It's called their "Going for the Gold Gala"—and they invited me to have a table of people as my guests. That was *very* tough to invite nine other people to come and join me that evening.

Both of my daughters were able to be there for that event, and the others that I did have at my table, after *great* soul-searching—[laughter] I mean, I just could have had 500—were Maya Miller, Sue Wagner, Jim McCormick and his wife, Loretta Terlizzi, Joan Kerschner, Bobbie Talso, and Sally Wilkins. I believe that is the group. We had a wonderful time together, and I was presented with their Woman of Achievement award, an absolutely gorgeous crystal vase engraved with my name on it. We had a really fun evening.

I mentioned the Nevada Federation of Women's Clubs making me an honorary member as part of my speaking to the Mesquite Club in Las Vegas. That was engineered by Blanche Zucker, for whom I had put together a tour, that I think we talked about earlier, during the legislative session of 1985 where we had a legislative action tour and her group practiced their speeches on the microphone on the bus. Well, Blanche is a very active member of the Mesquite Club, and she went back and reminisced about that after I did *my* talk. Then they presented me with the honorary membership award.

The Women's Studies Advisory Board chose to start a scholarship fund in my name at the university and aimed for a \$10,000 endowment, after which they would start giving scholarships from the interest. That was announced the night that President Crowley gave me the President's Medal. They did some direct mail solicitation, and it is absolutely overwhelming to know that, as of last week, that scholarship fund had \$22,000 in it. The first wave of contributions were at about \$3,000—ranging from \$10 to \$1,000. Elaine Enarson, who had been my predecessor in Women's Studies and who lives in Vancouver, sent a check for \$8,000, and that put it over its endowment figure goal right then. Since then, Nevada Bell has given an additional \$10,000.

So altogether, it's at about \$22,000. So that will start functioning next year.

I mentioned the Clark County Library. The Director of that library district called me in November and said their board had voted to give an annual award in my name to someone in Clark County who had made special efforts in regard to library support. Also, they wanted to set up a special collection in my name in one of the libraries. He asked my input on what topic that special collection might focus on. I thought about it for awhile, and then I talked with Joan Kerschner, and I decided that I wanted a broad topic of citizen action/community building, which would be an umbrella for a variety of things: grass roots organizing, women in politics, the National Issues Forum, deliberative action process, leadership—just a whole range of topics that I feel belong under community building. I thought of my own files that are all of the “how-to” files that I’ve used in workshops. I even have books that I’ve used as guides.

I don't think we've, anywhere, ever stopped and talked about the influence of books in my life. I have gained so much from books. Often a book would be the real catalyst for a project [laughter] or a series of things. That has been one medium of learning. For instance, I don't watch television at all. I mean, the weather channel is my television and some specials on public television, but I'm just not a television person. I know one could gain tremendously if they watch television all day long and were selective, at least. But that's not been my way. Reading the daily newspaper has *always* been a major piece of my life—at least one, and I generally have taken two or three wherever I lived. But books have been the other element.

So anyway, the library staff accepted my thought of the focus on the special collection. I said I would like to give them my files that

don't belong in the historic archives, but that might be useful to others. I could see them in a vertical file, where someone could just walk right from the file to the copy machine and take an idea that they find there and make use of it, which is what I did in my earlier days. So that project is now underway.

These that really leave a legacy are the ones that . . . You know, I'm honored by everything, but I am particularly pleased with these that help me see that some of what I've done will continue, or that the tools by which it might continue are going to be out there. So they've now designated Monte Hightower and Ann Langevin to be the liaisons from the library district to the setting up of this collection. They, actually, are *coming* to Carson City this weekend—the weekend of February 7th—and we are going to meet. Joan Kerschner and I are going to meet with them, and they're going to review the materials I have here that I would like to give them: books, pamphlets, files. This will tie very nicely with some other projects that Joan Kerschner has at the state library. I'm very, very excited about this.

What I also like about this is, this is in Las Vegas where sixty-five percent of Nevada's people are. I also see in this collection, organizational files of community organizations like the League of Women Voters, Common Cause and Progressive Alliance, where if one is turned on to getting *involved* in community, they can go right there and find out about organizations which they might join. So that's very exciting.

The League of Women Voters in Las Vegas has a tax-exempt fund called the League Education Fund, and they have chosen to rename that fund the Jean Ford Education Fund. They presented me with a certificate to that effect at an open house that was held for me down there on November 1 by the Nevada Women's History Project.

Another thing that really was very touching to me and a really surprise was at the October 25 event. The Nevada State Park System had an exhibit board in place there with pictures of state parks and letters from park administrators regarding my contributions in the sixties and seventies toward the development of Nevada State Parks. I just was doing *really* fine on kind of coping with all of this notoriety and seeing all these people and not totally breaking down, until I walked through the door and saw that exhibit. I just burst into tears. It was just such a surprise to see that. Bob Franke representing the State Park System on the program later talked about my involvement with state parks and how much the park system appreciated my efforts. They were planting a tree in my name at the entrance to the Spring Mountain Ranch in Las Vegas, which is out in Red Rock Canyon, which was one of my very favorite places and one of my early projects. And the display that they had on exhibit that night was going to be placed in a new wetlands area at Washoe Lake State Park. So, again, these things will be there to educate the public that comes along.

The Board of Regents giving me the Distinguished Nevadan Award was indeed an honor. They were scheduled to personally present it to me the evening of December 4. I was awaiting going into surgery at that time, so I never made it. They didn't know that until mid-afternoon, so a lot of people showed up, and they had a fine party with food and drink and presented it to me in absentia. Then the Chair of the Regents, Jill Derby, who's a close personal friend, formally presented it to me at the December 15 luncheon.

We've mentioned others at that luncheon: both Senator Reid and Bryan and the members of the Legislative Commission. It was great fun to see Bill Raggio as the leader

of the Senate and Joe Dini as the Speaker of the Assembly together present me with some special words of kindness and anecdotes in a humorous vein about my serving with them in the Legislature.

The Nevada Library Association, early on, as well as Maya Miller and Babette McCormick pledged money sufficient to cover the cost of this oral history, for which I am *very* grateful. The Nevada Library Association's contribution includes funds to print thirty copies of this oral history to be placed in libraries around the state.

Maya Miller has been a supporter of mine forever and a colleague in issues that we've worked on through the League, et cetera. She and Barbara and Bill Thornton gave the initial money that helped me start the Nevada Women's Archives in the UNR library. Maya also, then, gave a major grant toward the underwriting of this oral history and underwrote all the refreshments for the October gala.

I was *really* touched that the book on the history of the YWCA—that you would dedicate that book to me. And I really appreciate that and have enjoyed reading the book and . . .

*[laughter] It's one of those examples of how your support can make a difference. It wouldn't have happened without many contributions from you.*

A really special part of the evening on October 25 was the memory basket that was made by Mary Lee Fulkerson out of native plant materials. It was actually made out of willow, and I still have it. It's here in my living room at home with all of the messages that people wrote to me that evening. And it has four posters—four ends like a four-poster bed—actually representing four aspects of my



life: one, the Nevada government side with little Nevada flags; and then one representing women, which has all kinds of images of goddesses and women; one representing celebration, which is like a New Year's Eve party with horns, and confetti, and slinkies and all kinds of weird things; and the other one is nature, which is yarrow, and rabbit brush, and different wildflowers. That was really a very special gift from Mary Lee. She later wrote me a letter describing her feelings and interpretation of what the basket meant, and that's a part of the contents of the basket.

I just, last week, went to the first showing of a *new* video that's part of the "*Nevada Experience*" series on public television. It was produced by Rosemary McCarthy highlighting some pieces of the new book *Comstock Women: The Making of a Mining Community*, that was co-edited by Elizabeth Raymond and Ron James. I have a chapter in that book. We've talked earlier about my research. Well, since we started this oral history, that book was published. It came out in November, early December, and is really selling like hotcakes. There are about twelve authors who are contributors of chapters. Anita Watson, Linda White and I did the one on public life. This particular segment they chose to do on video, however, is on occupations of women on the Comstock. It features the women who were seamstresses or did various aspects of sewing; the Sisters of Charity and their work in creating the hospital, the orphanage, and the school; and boarding house managers and owners. It was a wonderful evening. They invited the people who are *in* the documentary and a number of other people. I received an invitation and learned, when I got there, that that particular documentary has been dedicated to me, as well, and it shows up on the screen at the beginning of the documentary.

In late November, a woman called me whom I had met last spring when she chose to go on my field trip, "Nevada Women on the Frontier". Her name is Colleen Janes, and she's an accountant with the dean's office in Arts and Science. She said she would like to come out and visit me, if she could, and bring a couple of people for a short time. And so we set up a time when that was convenient. When she did, they brought me a lovely quilt, just all made ready to go on my bed. Three women and a ten-year old girl came, and they represented the Relief Society of the second Ward of the LDS Church in Reno.

Colleen had gone to her Relief Society and talked about my work in preserving women's history and what she got out of going on the field trip, and they decided to make me a quilt. It's made of blue jean material. It's *just* beautiful—all kinds of blue jean material in squares with a white backing. And then at every intersection of the pieces of the quilt on the top is sewn a button. The buttons are all different, and they're just like out of an old button box. They're different colors, and it's just beautiful. And I've slept under it every night since.

So those kinds of things simply are incredible. [laughter] I think that's a fairly complete picture, to date. It doesn't begin to cover the correspondence and conversations. I *have* taken time to have quality time with a lot of people. And at these events where I've spoken, I've said that's really a big piece of my agenda now—hoping, realizing that I am going to have some more time. I don't know how much, but that's part of the balancing game now—is continuing to bring closure to projects that are important, connect with my daughters on a continuing basis and spend quality time with friends.

*Let's talk about having more time, because you have done some chemo now and I wanted to get that part in there.*

Right. Let's go back to what's happened since the surgery. December, Christmas time was not a good time. I did go to Las Vegas. I spent more time in bed than I did up. I just truly was not feeling that well, and I was getting back into the pain management program after the surgery.

I started the chemo on December 29. I now did chemo number six as of yesterday [February 2, 1998]. And I have just been overwhelmed by the lack of negative side effects from the chemo and, in fact, the positive effects of it. [laughter] I have not had any nausea.

When I go into the chemo, first, they take my weight and blood pressure, et cetera. Then they take my blood, and they test it right then to see if I have healthy enough blood that I can take the chemo. They give me, first, an injection of anti-nausea medicine and then the GEMZAR, which all of that together is about a two-hour procedure in the doctor's office in Reno. They have given me also anti-nausea pills to take afterwards, and I just dropped taking those on the third week, because I just was having no problem with that at all. There was an anticipation that my hair might fall out, somewhere between the third and fourth weeks. That has not happened, and I am very grateful that I still have a head of hair. I've actually had *more* energy the entire month of January than I did in December, for sure, and for the most part, have just been able to pick up on an active life.

I have one more treatment to go next Monday [February 9, 1998], and then I'm scheduled for a CAT Scan the following week, which should tell us whether there is a reduction in the size of the tumor. We will

decide, regardless of what that comes out with, whether another series of injections is appropriate. And so that's where we're at.

*OK. You're feeling that you have more time now than what they were talking about originally, which gives you a chance to look at some things you'd like to see done during your time.*

Right. Well, originally, plans went up through Christmas. There were some things on the calendar for spring, but I honestly felt that it was prudent to think that I might not be at those things. When I started back on the chemo on December 29th—actually, that week and then moving into January—I just immediately started feeling so much better, that I began to feel like there were certain things on the calendar that I was going to be able to do.

The first one coming up was going to Cowboy Poetry Gathering in Elko. A year ago, we had worked on tickets, and I had a reservation with a group of women that were going, so I began to think I could really go on that trip. And in fact, I *did* go on that trip. We were gone four days. There were eight of us in three cars, and we just had a great time and did all the things you do at Cowboy Poetry, which, I think, I've talked about earlier in the oral history. It's a special time.

I actually met with almost all of the Women's History Project members living in Elko. We have about eight members out there, and Cyd McMullen organized them to come to the Northeastern Nevada Museum in a meeting with me at one o'clock last Friday. I brought them up-to-date on History Project activities, and we talked about things they can do in Elko to be actively a part of the organization. So that was fun.

All through November and December a group of us were planning the next statewide

women's conference, which is scheduled for March 20 and 21 in Las Vegas and co-sponsored by the Nevada Women's Lobby, and it's being called a "Women's Summit". They had to get *all* the details together for sending the conference packet to the printer around the first of the year—early January—so that it could get out. I was in on some of the planning, but I really had not felt that I could count on being at the conference myself. Well, by first week in January, I'm thinking, "I'm going to that conference." [laughter] And by the second week in January, they had me down as the keynote speaker at the opening session. All of us began to feel that I really did have some extended time that earlier I just hadn't felt I could count on. We had, actually, tried to get Sue Wagner to be the keynote speaker. Sue has a Gaming Commission meeting the two days prior to that and just felt like she can't count on being able to have the energy to do that, so she had turned them down, and we were all looking for all kinds of other people to speak. Finally, Bobbie Gang said, "Jean, you have to be the speaker." And I said, "Well, you know, I think maybe I could do that."

My vision got stretched to March. Well, the next thing I began to think is, "I'm going to see wildflowers this spring." I understand the wildflowers are already out in the southern part of Death Valley, and so I am looking at a wildflower trip to Death Valley, probably the first of March for two or three days. There will be a bunch of people go, and we'll maybe take campers and enjoy the wildflowers. So these are all things that in the month of January, my reaction to the chemo and my general state of energy tells me that I will be around awhile longer. I don't think I've gotten anything scheduled beyond March 21st. [laughter]

Carla is coming on Valentine's Day with her three oldest children, ages five, seven, and

nine. They have a mid-winter break, so they will be here four whole days. During that time, Jan and at least her oldest will come up. Sam is coming from Molokai for that time to be with us, as well. So those days will be definitely family time, and we're looking forward to that.

Earlier, when we talked last November, we said we'll wait and do the last session about now. I felt like I wanted to end the oral history with things yet to be done, and I made a list of what some of those might be. Now some of those I'm doing. [laughter] So that's great. They fall, basically, into four categories: one is purely personal, and that is that I still want to get my Kodachrome slides organized, and in a way that they'll be ready to give to somebody. In the meantime, I have determined to give my books on women's studies and feminism to the Women's Studies Program at the university and keep the ones related to history for the Nevada Women's History Project, assuming that they're going to have a home with a space that can have a resource library. Other kinds of books I'm preparing to give other places, like the ones on leadership will go to the Special Collections in Las Vegas. Mary Bean, who lives here in Carson, has recently retired and is my assistant now in going through all of my books and organizing them to be given to the right places.

So that's a major project that's already underway.

Also kind of personal, I've never attended an Elder Hostel. I've taken the Elder Hostel catalogs since I was fifty-five and drooled over all kinds of activities and every time, there was just too much going on here to be able to block out time. And when I was teaching, then you had schedules to deal with. Well, I would love to go to an Elder Hostel. I don't know . . . that's not the highest thing on my list, but going to Elder Hostels would be a dream of mine to be able to do to in the future.

I love dancing. Getting back into Contra Dancing is something that I want to do as I can. And I have *always* loved the idea of getting into one of these senior tap dancing groups. I know Fritsi Ericson belongs to one that she religiously goes to, like every Wednesday night in Sparks, and we had a very active one in Las Vegas that performed all over town—seniors doing tap dancing. So *that* I thought would really be fun to do and was thinking maybe I ought to block out time to do that.

Hiking. I had set as a goal, at one time, to hike all the trails in Julie Carville's book *Linger in Tahoe's Wild Gardens*, and I've hiked about two-thirds of them. I really felt the way to do that would be to concentrate on about a two-week block of time and get a condo up at Tahoe, so I wouldn't have to keep driving back and forth all the time, and really do that in July and August when the wildflowers are at their height in the Tahoe Basin. Any piece of that I would love doing—to hike during the wildflower time, and, of course, the wildflower time is here. So I'm going to start setting aside time to follow the wildflowers wherever they may be.

Family is another category—having grandchildren visit me or my being able to visit them and, particularly, enjoy doing things with them one-on-one. I've been able to do some of that. Jan brought Hayley up with her to a Sandy Miller-at-the-mansion function in November, and we were able to enjoy each other. And then they came back for Thanksgiving, and I went down there for Christmas. Then Carla bringing her children. Ideally, I would still be able to make another trip back to Boston this summer. Whatever scheduling, time with family and grandchildren is important.

Cultivating a closer connection with both my daughters and supporting them in

their sorting out their lives and their future is something that's real important. We've gotten a good start on that, and we will continue to do that as much as we can. Jan is my financial trustee, I guess, is the term.

Jan will also be the executor of my trust, and Carla has the power of attorney on all my health care decisions. We've talked about those, and we have one of those living wills that I've signed. Most of it's fairly easy to deal with. I mean, I certainly don't want to be kept alive with a bunch of tubes and stuff, but there is that gray area there where one of the conditions is, "When I can no longer communicate or . . ." I've forgotten what the wording is. But the whole question is at what point is life not worth continuing to try to live? And we don't know what course the disease is going to take.

We have met with Hospice people in northern Nevada, and they are ready and willing to become a part of my support system whenever I need it. They do not have a facility, so what they do is provide services in the home as long as one can stay at home. They probably make staying at home a longer option. I definitely plan on using that if that's appropriate.

*Some hard decisions in there.*

Right. But if I get to a point where I'm just so weak that I can't continue to function, then I really don't see a lot of reason to be kept going artificially. When that's going to happen, we don't know, and those will be hard decisions for the girls to make with me, I guess, or make when I can no longer make them myself. But I think they have a pretty good feel for where I'm coming from, and they will want to do it the way I would want.

Another whole set of things relate to the Women's History Project. We stopped at a

point, I think, in the last oral history session about where some big decisions were needing to be made by the leadership of that group.

*In fact, we didn't even start, because that was an emotional point for you. We didn't even get into why that was emotional at the time.*

Right. Well, it was just really a very unknown at that point, and people hadn't really tackled the job of looking at the future of the organization. Since then, we have and, I think, in a very positive way. We had one major evening set aside where the board and members of the State Board and even representatives from Las Vegas came up, and we were able to do some brainstorming and looking at the future and found an overwhelming—there were about twenty people at the meeting—an overwhelming majority feeling very positive that the organization must go on: that it's doing very important work; that it can't do it without paid staff and an office and a bigger commitment on the part of members.

*And each of those was an issue at question?*

Right. And the big issue is, can we raise money regardless of what organizational model it might follow? It has to have sustained money over a several-year period for the basic infrastructure to keep the organization going while grant money is gotten for the specific projects, which I think is not difficult to do. So I feel very good about where things are with that. And I feel good that I will be able to continue to be a part of that dialogue now for awhile, too, and bring closure to some projects that I am still involved in, ones that would be very hard to turn over to somebody else.

*Yes. We're talking here about a process that's in place for the future of the Women's History Project. But if you had a dream for this project of what it would continue to be, do you know what that would look like? Or are you just, at this point, trusting in that process and kind of letting it go from there?*

Well, I think the direction that the last meeting went is a very good beginning. I would like to see it continue to be a non-profit organization. I think the relationship with the Nevada Women's Fund is an excellent one. Fritsi Ericson has made it very clear they feel the same way, and they would like to see us continue. I think we can look at new kinds of board structure and membership involvement that's going to necessitate a change in the bylaws. Women's Fund is very flexible in all of that, as long as we're protecting the non-partisan and non-profit nature of the organization.

So I'd like to see enough people give commitment to the leadership of the board of trustees and the fundraising, so that there can be paid staff and a home that includes a resource library and a home for my files on Nevada women and where there are hours where people can come and make use of them. Then a whole set of projects that come and go, as people envision them and can raise the grant money or other means of supporting them. I like the strong emphasis on developing products for use in the schools and training teachers to use them. I see the web site as being critical and raising money to hire competent people to enable us to expand our material on the web site and use it as a major marketing arm for the organization.

*Because the organization was founded on the philosophy that we were going to help people find Nevada women's history and to get that*



*information out, especially to schools and to the educational structure.*

Right. And we're working on that. Again, it takes finding that money to underwrite the *staff* support for all this to happen. That is the crucial thing. And we have to do some of that right now.

Kay Sanders has now taken over my job as part-time state Coordinator—has resigned as state President in order to do that. Kathy Noneman has been elected state President, at least through June. Kay's resignation made an opening on the board, which I was asked to fill, so I'm now on the board. And even *you* have accepted the job as secretary on the board.

*[laughter]* We're all pitching in, yes.

So there is a solid team there for the time being. But between now and June, we have to have some major commitment of support by a range of people and a show that they can raise money. Our plan for doing that—to have some small group meetings both here and in the South and get an active financial development plan going—is in the works.

Time will tell. June the 1st is the date scheduled for decision making by the members on whatever new ideas we come forth with, and I'm very optimistic that all of this will happen.

For the History Project, I now have had the energy to continue working on the web site. We've got it, quality-wise, at a place that I feel good about it. Now we just would like to add more bios, and so we're working on that. The publication of the annotated bibliography of published sources is underway. We have a lot more work to do on it, but it, too, will be on the web site. And we do have money set aside by the state Department of Libraries,

Museums, and Art to print that bibliography for distribution to libraries, particularly school libraries, so that, I think, will happen this spring.

I'm continuing to help Patt Quinn-Davis work with Sandy Miller on coming up with products out of her research on men and women who lived in the mansion as children. Nevada History Day is the other major project this spring that I, personally, was involved in, and we are just now trying to reach teachers to encourage them to encourage their students to do projects on Nevada women.

Some other work-related projects that I had hoped to be able to do now that I'm retired, and was hoping to live to be in my late eighties like my father and mother did, involved writing a book on the history of suffrage in Nevada. This has evolved county-by-county as I've written the "Sagas." The idea, I really felt, was to finish doing a county-by-county analysis of what went on with suffrage in each of those areas. I've done about half of them, so to do the other half would really be great fun, even if it's just to do the initial research and let somebody else put the final book together. But I think there's a book there about the history of suffrage in Nevada, and I would love to see that happen.

I'd love to see more dramas written about the things we find when we do that additional research. I met with people in Elko that are really interested in dramatizing, in some form, the story of suffrage as it went on in Elko County. There are people in Clark County interested in what went on down there, and there are people in Tonopah that would love to see the history of Tonopah in suffrage. So I'm sure there are people who can do that kind of thing and want my materials to be accessible somewhere where they can do that.

One of the things I had envisioned was putting a drama troupe together that agreed

to stay together for a couple of years and get serious about doing historical drama and doing another series of programs in the old Assembly chambers of the capitol, maybe combined with catered, sit-down dinners, and put a season together, where people knew there were going to be half a dozen each year. It wouldn't be just about suffrage, certainly; it wouldn't be just about women. It would be about Nevada history and other things that went on in that Assembly Chamber. There are some people interested in doing that: Patty Cooper-Smith, Susan Paslov, Roz Works. We're going to meet sometime soon and talk about that. That, I think, could receive funding, both through the Council on the Arts and the Nevada Humanities Committee, if they're serious about it. So I'd love to see that happen.

One of the things I've *always* wanted to do is work out some kind of thing where school children in Nevada made a field trip to Carson City sometime during their Nevada history studies. That's probably fourth grade or seventh grade. It would be developing, in Carson, a two to three-day series of programs and activities that school children from any county in the state might take advantage of and then marketing it to the school districts. The children would come in and spend maybe a day and a half or two days here, and the rest of the time on the road. We would have a corps of people here ready to deliver two days of education about the state capital. That could be an ongoing function of a group of people here in Carson who could, actually, be paid to do parts of that. So we're not talking about needing it to be a volunteer effort, necessarily, but it would take a lot of organizing and reaching the school districts. But that's a vision that I've had that I would love to see come about.

Of course, designing and leading more tours—I would just *love* to be able to do that. Jim McCormick and I had led the one to the National Basque Festival in Elko last July. In the History Project earlier this year, we had said, "Oh, we've got to do more tours." Had I not become ill, I was planning to design two: one to Great Basin National Park, which would probably go out Highway 50 and come back through Tonopah and include cultural history stops along the way; and the other one would be a spring Death Valley and wildflower trip combining that with the ghost towns of Rhyolite and Beatty, than to Goldfield, making a loop.

I honestly don't think I can be planning to participate in things like this for a year from now, but I certainly could work with anyone who felt like they wanted to take that on. The designing of the tour end I could do now. It just takes somebody willing to put in the time to coordinate and to identify people that can offer the kind of leading of a tour that Jim McCormick and I have done. Jim certainly can do it, and there are other people that can do it, too, if they know where to go for the resources. So I see myself working with a group of people that might keep the tour idea going, but I don't see leading it myself.

Carol Corbett, who's an archivist in Las Vegas, and I had actually dreamed of making our services available as a team to some of these rural Nevada towns that have incredible resources stashed away in closets and file cabinets and on shelves. They're not ever going to give it up. They're not going to send it to the archives at UNR or UNLV. I mean, they just aren't. They want to keep it at home, but they might be able to raise money—or *we* could raise money—to be paid to go process their materials where they are and get them in a state of preservation. We had dreamed of doing that, like in Eureka and Ely. So that's

something that we just thought, you know, we could do. And we were looking forward to that. Carol has proceeded. She already has explored with Tonopah, who now has some money to pay somebody to help them with their archives, and she is writing a proposal for doing that later this spring. But that's one of the things we had looked at in the future that we might do together and doesn't look likely, at this point in time.

*You have been so astounded at the outpouring of support, and people coming to you and saying what you've meant in their life. This is something that has caught you by surprise. I think those of us like myself, who you've had an impact on, are surprised that you're surprised.*

[laughter] Right.

*But you were talking a little bit about how this has led you to a new area of inquiry. Could you talk about that a little bit?*

One of the other things that I decided last October, as I moved into this whole new chapter of my life, was to really look at what I guess I'll call the "tending of spirit"—to look at that more spiritual side of me and examine where I was. Many of the things people gave me to read included healing: the relationship of mind and body; the difference between healing and curing; and just a lot of things related to the soul, the spirit. I think I've always felt that some piece of me was going to continue—that the soul does continue on when the body is gone. But I've done quite a bit of reading now, and that's another thing I'm trying to balance. I was asked to speak at the Unitarian Church, which is my church. They had a special day for me that was really nice, but it ended with their wanting me to make a few remarks at the end.

I said to them that day at the beginning of my remarks—that was January 4, I believe—that I had a new project. And there was this kind of slow chuckle through the room, because many of my best friends were there and people who have been with me on this whole journey and helped organize a lot of my support system and involved in projects. So there was this little chuckle, and I said, "And the project is *me*." And then there was a big chuckle all through the room. I talked for about ten minutes about my journey of learning who I really am—what is the authentic me? That I was just then beginning to try to process this response to my illness by people and accept that I'd done something throughout my life that had made an impact on other people, and that maybe I should try to figure out what that was.

What was I doing that would cause somebody twenty years later to come up to me in a restaurant and say, "I was in your Girl Scout troop, and because of that, my life has taken this direction that I feel good about," you know? Well, and I've gotten all this correspondence. So I've now decided I've got some time to *do* this. It's taking a higher priority here that I'm going to try to sort out what have been some elements of my leadership style, I guess, that have made some of these things happen. I'm actually going to ask a small number of people, (because I'm really too close to it [laughter], and I'm not sure I can figure that out) but have people who have worked with me through the years or have observed me in action tell me what *they* think are the elements of what I've been doing that have motivated people or been an inspiration or have made a difference in people's lives. I am trying to comprehend what those are.

It's obvious that it has happened. Now if we can package that [laughter] in some way,

if we can identify the pieces of it, it will be helpful to others. I mean, that's there for other people to do. I think the whole idea—it's only been in the last ten or fifteen years and we've talked about this throughout the history—is that when I grew, there were increments of growth that we know were there.

One of the things that I started incorporating in speeches that I made, any time I was asked to do something that looked like the more motivational kind of speech, I started drawing out of my own experience things that I could now say had made a difference to my growth. One of them was this whole idea that I was *somebody*.

For years in my life, I was a person who might read the paper or see an injustice or something and say to myself, "Why doesn't somebody do something about that?" And we do that all the time. Well, at some point in my life, I started realizing that I was the "somebody" that *could* do something about that, or at least I could raise the question; that I was "somebody." And that played out in a whole range of ways. I had, I realized, been waiting for people to *ask* me to do things, when I, in fact, could initiate things myself. I didn't have to wait for others to ask me. I could have an idea, and I could go present that idea to someone; I could lead; I could be in charge of something.

All of this came very gradually and incrementally. The whole idea that I was "somebody," and in so being, had the personal power to take charge of my life and make decisions, is a new one to me (relatively speaking) in the last fifteen to twenty years.

And I think we pinpointed sometimes when we saw that happen. And so *that's* part of this whole formula—how did I start doing that that, obviously, drew more people along with me and made people want to work with me?

Sylvia Ontaneda-Bernales, in interviewing me for a magazine article, raised a question and made an observation that really was kind of a breakthrough for me. She said, "Well, you know, one of the things you said is that in this particular instance, you found a home." That just triggered something in me. As we have talked, we can go back in this oral history and probably find eight or ten places where I said, "And then I found a home," whether it was in the Legislature, where I knew I could make a difference in public policy; or the Women's Studies Program, where I was going to be in charge of women's studies; or any number of other places.

I *now* want to sit down and, more formally, analyze that. I realize now that I found about thirty "homes" in the course of my life, particularly in Nevada, which became places that I could function in. Some of them weren't that *good* a home. They didn't have all the elements I needed to succeed, and so I moved on. One was being the state agency director, and another was running my own business with a group of people that didn't jell. What we thought was a home didn't turn out to be the right kind of home to make it worthwhile. And so now I want to do some analyzing of that, as well. When we say, "I found a home," what does that mean? What are the elements of a home, of a successful home? And maybe *that's* the answer to my success—making those elements come together.

I've started thinking about what those might be. And I've mentioned those along the way, as we've stopped. I've had those little career planning times when I said, "Now the next time I move to another job, what do I want in that?" Some of these elements appeared loud and strong in that process. One would be where creativity was valued, where you didn't have to fit in a box, and can't rock the boat, and all of that. So that's just one of

the elements. I'm now working on what those other elements of a "home" might be.

That, tied with other people looking at me and trying to come up with some descriptors of how I've done the things I've done, I think we're going to come out with some really interesting analyses of leadership, of what anybody can do if they put the right pieces together and make a difference in their own lives and in people's lives, other community lives, and in the state of Nevada.

*Have you thought also that it's not only the elements of your personality and the elements of a home that you found, but, perhaps, you made that home for other people as you went?*

Well, absolutely. Now this isn't complete, so I can't give you the answers. There's another chapter coming out here somewhere. I don't know that it'll get into the oral history, but it's obvious that I could *never* work by myself. I could never have gotten *any* of this done by myself—that I *had* to have other people. There are other people who achieve great things and make all kinds of contributions and do it absolutely all alone—writers, researchers, artists, whatever. And that's not me. That has never been me. I have *had* to be interacting with other people in order to function. Part of that is that the visions I've had were always too big for one person to do. It *had* to have a *group* of people to do it.

Some of those elements which I can just quickly relate would be that you have to have a common vision or purpose. And for me, that has to be related to the common good. Just like my forays into making money have all been a disaster. I'm just not a capitalist. [laughter] I'm just not an entrepreneur that wants to get rich. Like I could never have been a lobbyist for hire on things I didn't believe in. So anything that I've gotten into, there

has to be a public interest element to it, and everybody there has to agree with that—has to be there for that same reason, or the majority have to be there for that same reason.

It *has* to involve productive group work in which creativity is respected and cultivated and appreciated and non-traditional approaches—that you don't have to do it all with the tried-and-true techniques—that you're willing to risk doing things new ways.

Now, at the same time, there *has* to be structure. There has to be organization and structure, which just drives some creative people nuts. That's the *last* thing they want is organization and structure. But I *have* to have the predictability of an infra-structure, that everybody agrees is going to be the basis from which this group operates, that has to cultivate collegiality and team work and a partnership approach to doing things; it isn't a command and control where somebody's in charge giving orders. There has to be integrity and respect for that group, that project, that comes as a result of these other things I've mentioned.

And that has to be built into the organization or the project from the beginning or developed along the way, a sense of belonging—that people can get a sense of belonging, of personal acceptance and a potential for making a difference. So that ties back to this kind of basis of something related to the common good. And for me, it needs to be very inclusive as to gender, race, class, and sexual orientation.

Now, what started to happen is, as I've started looking at my experience and the places I found a home, that there came a time when I realized I could create that home, as well. If I couldn't find an organization that was already there that I could join, I could go create something and get other people to come with me, and we, together, could create



the home we wanted for that particular vision to take place. What I *haven't* done, but plan to, is lay that out on a time frame.

I don't know when that started, but this time frame is going to show that one of the earliest would be the petitions to create a Clark County library, when we went out and did it ourselves. It wasn't there, so we made it happen. And then, obviously, the Women's History Project is the latest, but there are probably eight or ten things in between that are other examples of where I didn't find it, and I found enough people who had the same vision I did, so we went and created it. So there's another chapter coming here of the things that will kind of tie together . . .

*Oh. Things that you're still discovering about yourself and what you've been contributing.*

Right.

*Do you want to end there? Is there anything else that you would like to add, at this point?*

I haven't thought of any final benediction to offer. [laughter] I should have. [laughter]

*Nor do we know. As we work with it, we may come back and add to the oral history, so that's always a possibility.*

I guess we *do* need to acknowledge that we have plans now for you to move one step further and take. . . not *all* of this, which would be a tome. It may well be this kind of thing we've just been talking about today, of my leadership style and how I've been able to motivate other people, and what does that all mean, and how could others take that and run with it—but arrive at some focus and take it into a more structured biography, which I am very excited about. And so the end is not here yet.

*I'm excited about it, too. And I think the work that you're doing now on the new project, "Me" [yourself] is going to be a real help in pulling all that together and giving it some thread.*

I guess the wildest idea has come in the last couple of days as a result of listening to some tapes by Dr. Caroline Myss, who looks at herself as a medical intuitive, which is a new term for me. (She works with M.D.'s on this mind-body connection.) She actually came up with this thought that related to me, to my case . . . in fact, *my* illness. Now I've even had people say to me my illness is because I have brought it on from negative energy in my life, and even that I don't like myself. I find that hard to believe. [laughter] But when I've told that to other people, they said, "Well, that person really did a disservice to you by even suggesting it." But I haven't bought that.

But she talks a lot about energy—a negative energy/positive energy—a lot of terms that I'm still trying to digest. But *her* thought is that an illness could be brought on by so much *positive* energy that it *truly* was recognizing that the end was near, and that it was time to stop and take stock, as, in fact, I am doing.



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## NOTES

1. Others with me in the meeting with Mr. McCollom were: Mrs. L. D. Hodler, Mrs. Geoffrey Stormson, Mrs. Richard Titman, Mrs. Nelson Williams, and Lydia Malcolm. (In those days, we were often referred to by our husbands' names only.)

2. Black members who were very active were Helen Anderson, Margaret Crawford, Helen Crozier, Verlia Davis, Mabel Hoggard, Alice Key, Lavonne Lewis, Bernice Moten, Eva Simmons, and Thelma Toms.

3. I couldn't begin to name all those who took active roles, but I do want to name a few with whom I worked long and hard: Marilyn Bollinger, Kate Butler, Margaret Cahill, Dorothy Eisenberg, Edith Fink, Mary Forrester, Annette Goldstein, Marilyn Hauswurz, Edythe Katz, Mabel Hoggard, Ardis Kearns, Minna Lavites, Florence McClure, Jan MacEachern, Naomi Millisor, Bernice Moten, Robin Morgan, Selma Orleans, Mandy Pino, Lavonne Lewis, Jean Rambo, Estey Rouso, Malvene Rowe, Weona

Harves, Margaret Quinn, Daisy Talvitie, Ann Zorn, Glade Koch, Maxine Peterson.

4. Maude Frazier, Eileen Brookman, Flora Dungan, Helen Herr, Geraldine Tyson and Juanita White were the six women were elected to the Nevada state Legislature from Clark County prior to Jean Ford's election to the Assembly in 1972. From 1972 to 1996, 35 women were elected from Clark County.

5. Men whom I consider good friends include Robbins Cahill, Charles Hunsberger, Bruce Carroll, Chuck McCrea, Vince Triggs, Zack Taylor, Hal Erickson, Andy Grose, Assemblymen Joe Dini, Hal Smith, Pat Murphy, and Jim Ullom, and Senators Jim Kosinski, Spike Wilson, and Cliff Young. In later years, I would add to this list Tom Tait, Gene Paslov, Larry Struve, Jim McCormick, Jim Hulse, and Wally Cuchine.

6. But I do need to mention those with whom I worked the most: Jim and Betty Hulse; Kathy, Elmer, and Mary Rusco; Sherm

and Louise Swanson; Bob and Edna Brigham; Lois and Dave Bianchi; Bobbie and Rudy Talso; Kathy and Gary Norris; Ginnie and Bob Kersey; Felix and Betty Jo Stumpf; Jim McCormick, Loretta Terlizzi, April Townley, Ken Zeising, Penny Le Pome, Pauline Bevill, Howard McCarthy, Fred Peterson, Agnes Howell, John Pollastro, Sandy Young and Sally Wilkins.

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## PHOTOGRAPHS



Jean and brother Byron, 1933  
Photograph courtesy Jean Ford





Jean and Byron, December 25, 1941



"We played junior and senior proms all over Oklahoma."  
The "Swingsters," Jean at the piano, 1949.

Photographs courtesy Jean Ford



At Ft. Riley, Kansas with the American Red Cross, 1952.



In Honolulu, Hawaii with the Red Cross, 1954. "I learned how to play the ukulele. We had a ukulele club."

Photographs courtesy Jean Ford



“It was a military wedding. We had a reception at the officers’ club.” Jean and Samuel Ford were married April 9, 1955 in the chapel at Tripler Army Hospital in Honolulu, Hawaii.

Photograph courtesy Jean Ford



Daughters Carla (left) and Janet (right) wear outfits made by Jean. (March, 1962.)

Photograph courtesy Jean Ford



Nevada State Park Commission, 1972: (Back row) Bob Forson, North Las Vegas; Chris Sheerin, Elko; Col. Tom Miller, Reno; Clif Segerblom, Boulder City. (Front row) Thalia Dondero, Las Vegas; Audrey Harris, Reno; Jean Ford, Las Vegas.



In home office, Las Vegas, 1972.

Top: Photograph courtesy Special Collections, University of Nevada, Reno Library.

Bottom: Photograph courtesy Jean Ford





Jean and Sam with daughters Carla (top), Janet (bottom), and dog, Brutus, 1972.

Photograph courtesy Jean Ford



Assemblyman Jean Ford with Assemblyman Pat Murphy, both freshmen in the Nevada Legislature, on opening day of the legislative session, 1973.



Back row (left to right) Assemblyman Margie Foote, Assemblyman Mary Gojack. Front row (left to right) Assemblyman Eileen Brookman, Speaker Keith Ashworth, Assemblyman Jean Ford, 1973.

Top: Photograph courtesy Special Collections, University of Nevada, Reno Library.

Bottom: Photograph courtesy Jean Ford



Chairing the Nevada Women's Conference,  
June 17-19, 1977, Las Vegas Convention Center.

Photograph courtesy Special Collections, University of Nevada, Reno Library



As a federal appointee on the Western Regional Advisory Committee to the National Park Service, Jean took a three-day trip down the Colorado River by raft and motorboat with fellow commissioners, 1974.



Being welcomed into the Democratic Party by state Senator Mary Gojack at the Democratic state convention, May 1978.

Top left and bottom: Photograph courtesy Special Collections, University of Nevada, Reno Library. Top right: Photograph courtesy Jean Ford





1978 campaign photo.

Photograph courtesy Special Collections, University of Nevada, Reno Library





While visiting daughter, Janet, in Paris at Christmas time, 1978, Jean enjoys dinner and festivities at a French restaurant as maitre d' places garter on her leg.



Senator Jean Ford in Senate session, 1979.



Speaking on Nevada state Senate floor, 1979.  
(Senator James Kosinski at right.)

Photograph courtesy Special Collections, University of Nevada, Reno Library



With Assemblyman Sue Wagner on trail ride from Monitor Valley to Table Mountain following the 1979 legislative session. This pack camping trip was organized for legislators by the U.S. Forest Service, which provided pack animals, horses, food, and guides. Jean was the only woman in the Legislature at this time, and she invited her friend, Sue Wagner.



Holding the Ruthe Deskin “Woman of the Year” award from the Nevada Women’s Political Caucus, 1982. This award was one of the earliest recognitions by the women’s movement of Jean’s work.





At the Exchange Club in Beatty, Nevada, last night out on the “Marigolds and Gloryholes” tour, 1984. (Left to right) Dr. Bill Fiero, geologist, University of Nevada and tour geology expert; Jean, tour coordinator; Maxine Peterson, partner in tour company and tour coordinator; Pat Leary, botanist, Clark County Community College and tour botany expert; Bonnie Bryan, honorary tour guide.





“It seemed like a mission ought to have a base that began with a respect for the history of the women that have gone before us and the value of gathering that and disseminating it . . . particularly to young women coming up.” Jean Ford, co-founder of the Nevada Women’s History Project at its Reno YWCA office, March 1998.

Photograph by T.R. King



This portrait of Jean by Jim McCormick was used on the invitation to the “Wildflowers and Sage” celebration of Jean Ford’s life, October 25, 1997.

Portrait courtesy of Jim McCormick

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## ORIGINAL INDEX: FOR REFERENCE ONLY

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